

MILITARY CHAPLAINS'

REVIEW

1987

















# Military Chaplain's Review

Fall 1987

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Professional Bulletin of the US Army Chaplain Corps

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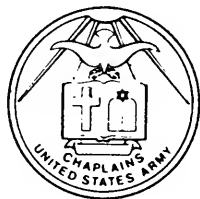
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# Military Chaplains' Review

Fall 1987

**The Constitution**





# **Military Chaplains' Review**

Professional Bulletin of the US Army Chaplain Corps

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Articles should be submitted in duplicate, double spaced, to the editor, *Military Chaplains' Review*, United States Army Chaplain Board, Watters Hall, Bldg. 1207, Fort Monmouth, NJ 07703. Articles should be 12 to 20 pages long; and when appropriate, carefully documented. Detailed editorial guidelines are available from the editor.

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Persons interested in contributing an article on one of the themes listed above should coordinate with the editor to insure that the contribution fits well with other articles planned for the issue.

The *Military Chaplains' Review* prints an occasional “non-thematic” issue. Any subject having to do with chaplain ministry is appropriate for such issues.

## **The United States Constitution . . .**

The United States Constitution, the principle artifact of our history, is a yellowed and aging document, signed in Philadelphia two hundred years ago, and kept today in the vaults of our nation's capital as the cornerstone and touchstone of our national life.

The United States Constitution is so much more than the document. It is the hope of freedom and democracy as the founders of our nation dared to dream and struggle for it. It is the experience of freedom and democracy as Americans for two hundred years have known it within these shores—as we have served it, fought for it, and enjoyed its benefits and blessings.

This issue of the *Military Chaplains' Review* celebrates the Constitution of the United States, the period of history that gave birth to the founding document, the nation, and the chaplaincy, and it explores some of the rewards and challenges of this legacy.

William Noble





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# An Evolving American Ideal

Israel Drazin

At the Constitutional Convention, Philadelphia, 1787, there were difficulties. Only eleven states participated. Rhode Island refused to attend. New York lacked a quorum. There were 74 delegates, but no more than 55 attended any part of the Convention. The Constitution was signed by 39 delegates, about half of the members. Sixteen refused to sign. The Convention was to have begun on May 14, but a quorum was not present until the 25th and serious discussions did not begin until the 29th. The Constitution was signed on September 17, 1787, but it was not adopted before June 21, 1788, and only then after great struggle. Virginia, for example, ratified it by a vote of 89 to 79; Massachusetts by a slim majority of 187 to 168. The final version of the document matched no one's ideal. It was replete with ambiguities (to satisfy different views) and compromises (to avoid conflict).

Convention members imposed a rule of silence upon themselves so that the country would not know of the conflicts raging within the hall. Guards stood watch at the door where liberty was born. Windows were latched despite the heat. James Madison refused to publish his "Notes on the Constitution" in his lifetime, fearful that the revelation of disagreements, debates, and compromises would undermine the hopes of the new nation.

Philosophical tensions arose between individual rights and societal needs. While recognizing the supreme value of liberty, the document created restraints. Moreover, there were theological diffi-

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Chaplain (Brigadier General) Israel Drazin was ordained as a rabbi in 1957 and entered the Army, at the age of 21, as the youngest chaplain ever to serve on active duty. In the active reserve, he served in increasing grades and as lecturer at The US Army Chaplain School from 1978 to 1981. In 1984 Chaplain Drazin was responsible for preparing the winning defense for the suit challenging the constitutionality of the chaplaincy. Today he serves as Assistant Chief of Chaplains, the highest reserve officer position in the Army chaplaincy.

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culties as well. The Constitution did not mention God. The Constitution “secured rights,” but it did not save souls.

The most repugnant part of the Constitution’s seven articles is the strange mathematics of its first article: five slaves equal three free people for determining representation. The article considered a woman a person for representation but a non-entity regarding the right to vote.

Finally, the greatest fiction associated with the Constitution: the people did not want it. No accurate figures exist, but a reasonable estimate says that no more than 2.5 per cent of America’s 4 million people favored its ratification.

## **The Delegates**

The men who wrote and signed the Constitution had much to learn. They were flesh and blood human beings, not saints, nor even the “demi-gods” Jefferson called them. They possessed the wisdom of their age in abundance, but lacked the insights and sensitivities of future generations.

James Madison, for example, was “no bigger than half a piece of soap.” He was shy, bookish, a little man with a little voice. There were many moments during the debates when his voice could not be heard. He had a giant intellect and used it well at the Convention. He was the most fastidious of the founders for the separation of church and state. He was so scrupulous that he ordered the mail delivered on Sundays to demonstrate rigorous religious impartiality. Yet, even he was inconsistent. In 1812, when he saw the Capital in flames, he shuttered, forgot his principles, and declared a national day of prayer. In his younger days, Madison supported and voted for a military chaplaincy. In his retirement, he opposed the military chaplaincy and wrote, “This has always been my view.”

Pennsylvania’s Governor Morris was the antithesis of James Madison. Morris, a notorious womanizer, was a rich, landed aristocrat, a man of order with a near-Hamiltonian contempt for people. He had a wooden leg which gossip attributed to a fall from a window after having been chased from the house by a jealous husband. Pacing up and down the convention hall, Morris loved to use the wooden leg to punctuate his loud sentences with a thump. With 173 speeches, he set the record for the Constitutional Convention. Today his famous wooden leg is displayed as a national monument by the New York Historical Society. This interesting, and some would say, colorful man, took the rambling and disorganized constitutional draft, rewrote it in four days, and is responsible for its final wording.

Tall, stately George Washington suffered greatly at the hands of nature as well as physicians. He lost his teeth at an early age, and his face was pitted from a teenage bout with smallpox. Finally, his

life was taken by a doctor who, following the therapeutic practices of his day, bled him unmercifully when Washington had only a common cold.

At the Convention, Washington, the “father of our country,” sat formal and remote throughout the sessions. He said virtually nothing during the public debates. He is remembered for having chided a delegate for leaving a scrap of paper on the floor.

Many believe that Washington loved a neighbor’s wife before and after his marriage. Near the end of his life, he told Sally Fairfax that even the glories of his presidency had not been able “to eradicate from my mind those happy moments, the happiest in my life, which I have enjoyed in your company.” He married Martha, an uneducated woman who could hardly read and write, because Sally was unavailable and because Martha’s wealth would fulfill his plan to convert Mount Vernon into a magnificent plantation. One might ask: Had this slave owner become more sensitive to human dignity, would his marital life have had a mercantile foundation?

Benjamin Franklin’s marital and family situation was far worse than Washington’s. Franklin joined in a “common-law” union with a married woman whose husband abandoned her. Franklin’s “wife” could neither read nor write. Unable to converse in quiet tones, “Mrs.” Franklin remained in America while her husband was ambassador to France. Franklin had an illegitimate son from another woman before he met his “wife.” This son joined the Torries, became governor of New Jersey, and was arrested and ousted by the patriots.

Franklin suggested to the Convention delegates that they begin each day with a prayer, for a prayer would calm them. (A strange understanding of the purpose of prayer.) The delegates refused. They were afraid that the people would hear about the prayer and think there was trouble.

As the governor of Pennsylvania, Franklin was brought to the Convention each day in a sedan chair carried by prison inmates. Although he spoke of human rights, neither Franklin nor his generation understood prisoners to have rights which are not forfeited by the commission of a crime.

Not all of the nation’s founders were present at the Convention. Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, and Tom Paine, for example, did not participate in the historic deliberations. Their lives also show the need for a more developed concept of human dignity.

Patrick Henry’s wife was insane, and he kept her tied up in the basement of his home. His first important case as a lawyer was known as “The Parson’s Case.” The ministers of Virginia complained that they should be paid more from public taxes. Henry was engaged by the people to oppose the Crown-supported clergy. Henry argued that the clergy were neglecting their duties, not on the

principle of the separation of church and state. Because of the case, he became famous as anti-clerical. After the decision in the case, he told his uncle that he would have taken the clergy's side if they would have hired him. He accepted the people's side because the clergy did not retain him and because he needed an important case to gain attention and to make his reputation.

With regard to church and state issues, Thomas Jefferson was as inconsistent as James Madison. In 1773, after the Boston Tea Party, he persuaded the Virginia House of Burgesses to appoint a day of fasting and prayer to ask "divine interposition" to avert "the Evils of Civil War." This was a political expedient. Jefferson had achieved an early renown, at age 24, with a case involving religion. At issue was whether a church could discharge its ministers for drunkenness, profanity, fighting and moral offenses. The church officials argued that religious matters could not be addressed and decided by civil courts. This is established law today. Jefferson, however, took the opposite view. He cited English precedents to prove civil authority is supreme, and he won the case.

Thomas Paine, the famous Quaker author of *Common Sense*, the book that stirred the nation, arrived in America after abandoning his wife. After the Revolution, he was arrested in France, and George Washington refused to help him because Paine had attacked organized religion. Paine counter attacked and called Washington a "hypocrite." The "tolerant" Quakers refused to bury this patriot.

These observations and comments are not meant as a disparagement of our founders. Many remarkable deeds can be cited to show the positive impacts of the men and women of this period upon their own and future generations. Our purpose is to say that only the seeds of liberty and sensitivity were planted in early America. We have the divinely ordained duty to nurture, develop and improve these plantings.

We must advance beyond liberating "the imprisoned intellect," (Jefferson's words) to develop the spirit of God in everyone. We must provide an opportunity for all persons to practice faith, even as everyone is allowed to breathe freely, and never to diminish, hinder, or degrade this liberty except under the most compelling of circumstances as in matters of public health or safety.

## Early Laws

Early American documents embody the seed from which twentieth century ideals have flowered. The European founders of this country attempted to free themselves from the tyranny of excessive and oppressive religious and state control. The Mayflower Compact, for example, had two guiding and controlling elements: the advancement of the Christian faith and fealty to the "dread sovereign Lord, King James."

The 1639 Fundamental Articles of New Haven required every inhabitant to agree that the Scriptures provide the perfect rule of government for everyone. The Articles permitted only church members to be free citizens.

The 1643 New England Confederation rewrites history: “We all came into these parts of America with one and the same end and aim, namely, to advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to enjoy the liberties of the Gospel, in purity and peace.”

The king taught his subjects in the 1663 Charter of Rhode Island “that true piety (is) rightly grounded upon gospel principles . . . (and) liberty (is derived from) the true Christian faith and worship of God.”

The Declaration of Independence of 1776, and the United States Constitution of 1787 took enlightened steps toward recognizing the rights of all people. But the documents did not travel the necessary distance, so to speak. Despite the Declaration’s mention of “unalienable rights,” Thomas Jefferson’s state of Virginia retained its law calling for the burning of religious heretics. New Jersey limited full civil rights to Protestant citizens until 1844. Pennsylvania and Maryland required public office holders to believe in God. Maryland retained this requirement until 1961.

Connecticut taxed its citizens to support the Congregational Church through 1818. Until 1833 Massachusetts’ constitution authorized towns to pay ministers with public funds where voluntary contributions were inadequate. New Hampshire continued this practice even into the twentieth century.

The United States Constitution of 1787 made many non-Christian citizens of a country for the first time. Fifty years later, however, in the 1830s the United States Supreme Court misread the constitutional intent and labeled the United States a “Christian Country.” About 25 years later, in 1857, Chief Justice Taney articulated similar misguided words in his infamous *Dred Scott* decision: “Negroes were not intended to be included under the word *citizens* and can, therefore, claim none of the rights and privileges of citizens . . . ” This was the limit to insensitivity to human dignity only eighty years after the Constitution was signed.

It was not until 1920 and the 19th Amendment that women had the right to vote. In 1875 the Supreme Court, the chief interpreter of the Constitution, had expressly prohibited women from voting. Similarly, in 1878 the Supreme Court restricted Mormons from observing their faith because the justices understood Mormons “an abomination” and “un-Christian.” This was 91 years after the Constitution.

It was not until the 1960s that the Supreme Court interpreted the free exercise clause of the Constitution (“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free

exercise thereof,") to mean that the government may not restrict religious practices except when there is a compelling state need to do so because of dangers to public safety or public health. After the Constitution was signed, most states continued to support religion by granting tax exemptions and other benefits to religious organizations and clergy. This practice continues even today.

Moreover, states wrote laws expressly prohibiting the violation of the Sunday-Sabbath. And many of these laws still exist. We have placed God, as it were, in the salute to the flag, and we begin many public civil ceremonies with prayer. We justify this behavior by secularizing and minimizing the practice. The Supreme Court has said that the purpose of public prayer of this sort is to quiet the audience. Similarly, the Court justified the national observance of Christmas by making it a secular holiday and justified government support of a Nativity Scene by declaring it an historical reminder of a secular holiday. These rationalizations prompt our children to call us hypocrites for gaining legal public support through such devious devices, but what is worse, many believe what the Court is saying regarding the *secular* purpose of religious practices. Clearly the Constitution did not resolve all problems. There is much yet to be done.

## **Greatness of the Constitution**

The Constitution affirms the basic articles of political faith contained in the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration states: "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

The writers recognized that they did not create these natural rights and that they cannot be taken away by any sovereign. These rights are the potential which we must nurture. The Constitution's greatness resides in its potential and in its recognition of the need to struggle.

The Constitution's second great contribution is its articulation of the internal dynamics of government: the separation of powers with checks and balances. The founders knew that encounters—exchange, argument, and exertion—are necessary for growth.

## **Application to the Chaplaincy**

Like the writers of the Constitution, the chaplaincy did not start out pure, with a carefully focused knowledge of its role in the present and future or with a sure means for attaining that place. The history of the Constitution reminds us that we must be constantly refining our values. In this quick look at our two hundred years with the



Constitution, we have seen how easily our country forgot its goals, how it frequently sanctified the status quo, and trampled the “unalienable rights” of many of its citizens.

One of our conflicts as military chaplains is the tension between our secular and religious roles. We must resolve that struggle properly. It is possible to rise from this seeming paradox to a higher level, a status sanctioned and applauded by God, a better, higher and more inclusive role than any of our civilian counterparts. We must fear, understand and love God, in that order, and as a consequence, fear, understand and love everything and everyone, for everything and everyone was created by God and carries the spirit of God. We must behave with humility before all and with acts of mercy and charity. This posture, particularly for the chaplaincy, is to be discovered in one of our primary functions—to provide for the free exercise rights of every member of our command.

Through our free exercise role, we can become more than a priest, a minister, a rabbi, or imam. We can become military chaplains, men and women who fully serve our denominations and who fully provide for the free exercise rights of all members of our units and staffs. We work toward the day when others will see and recognize a military chaplain for what he or she is and praise the chaplain—not as a priest, a minister, a rabbi or imam, but more than that—quantitatively and qualitatively more—as a military chaplain.



# Before the Troops: Sermons to Militias 1763-1775

Edwin M. Perry

The eighteenth century clergy of the American colonies, and especially those in New England, performed a valuable service to this country by preparing their people—soldiers and civilians—for the coming revolution. From the end of the French and Indian War in 1763 to the outbreak of the American Revolution, they sought to create conditions within the American colonies which would promote a millenium of both political and religious liberty. Their efforts during the period completed the grafting of the Whig political values onto the traditional New England identity and by 1775 many in America equated piety with whiggery.<sup>1</sup>

In eighteenth century America when the clergy preached, they used perhaps the most powerful tool available for the shaping of religious, cultural and political values; *i.e.*, the sermon. In pre-revolutionary America, the sermon provided many colonists their only medium for public education. Through sermons the clergy extended

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<sup>1</sup> Nathan O. Hatch, "The Origins of Civil Millennialism: New England Clergy, War with France, and the Revolution," in *Colonial America: Essays in Political and Social Developments*, eds. Stanley Katz and John Murrin (New York: Knopf, 1982), 512-513.

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Major Edwin M. Perry, USA, Infantry, was graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1974. He is also a graduate of the Infantry Officer Basic and Advance Courses, and the Airborne and Ranger schools. Previous assignments include the 1st Bn., 21st Inf, 25th Infantry Division Ft. Jackson, S.C. from 1975-1978; and instructor in the Department of History, United States Military Academy, West Point, New York from 1979-1982. Major Perry is currently a student in the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

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and popularized the doctrines of natural rights, the concept of the social contract, the right to resist, and America's constitutional basis.<sup>2</sup> Many historians have discussed the important role which the clergy performed during this period immediately before the American Revolution, but despite this historical attention, neither of the two recent official histories of the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps dedicate a chapter to this period.<sup>3</sup> The present article is written to supplement these two works.

In sermons to militias between 1763 and 1775, the clergy combined complex political and religious ideas and made the soldier's political striving a means for his religious redemption.<sup>4</sup> The clergy blessed the soldier's profession and established his cause and its righteousness. They defined how the political and religious community expected the soldier to conduct himself individually and collectively. The clergy explained to him the sort of war they and his God would support.

This informal association of clergy and soldier existed most strongly in New England.<sup>5</sup> On militia training days, mandated by the colonial assemblies, the local minister often preached a sermon to the troops. The sermons the soldier received were either rooted in a purely religious theme or provided the soldier with moral guidance on some pressing social or political matter. Additionally, in many of these same New England communities, the clergy frequently preached before the annual election of militia officers.

These New England sermons also influenced attitudes elsewhere in the colonies. Local printers published and sold these special sermons to sustain themselves financially.<sup>6</sup> Once printed, these sermons were circulated up and down throughout the colonies. In this way sermons preached by Congregational ministers in New England often served as models for other preachers in the colonies to the south.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) 3; Alice Baldwin *The New England Clergy and the American Revolution* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 1958), xii.

<sup>3</sup> See Roy J. Honeywell *Chaplains of the United States Army* (Washington D.C.: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, 1958); and Parker C. Thompson *From Its European Antecedents to 1791: The United States Army Chaplaincy* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, 1978).

<sup>4</sup> Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1981), 156.

<sup>5</sup> J. T. Headley *The Chaplains and Clergy of the Revolution* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1864), 16.

<sup>6</sup> Lawrence C. Wroth *The Colonial Press* (New York: Grolier Club, 1931), 207.

<sup>7</sup> Perry Miller "Religion as a Revolutionary Ideology" in *The Ideology of the American Revolution*, ed John R. Howe Jr. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), 36; see Christopher Gould and Richard Parker Morgan *A Descriptive Bibliography: South Carolina Imprints 1731-1800* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-Clio Press, 1985), 105, 107, which identifies three sermons preached in Philadelphia in 1775 for sale in the South Carolina and American General Gazette. See also the

Though some historians argue that printed sermons do not represent the typical topics which were preached in the New England meeting house each Sabbath, they are the basis for this study. The critics of this methodology assert that when the printed sermon is exclusively examined, the reader is given a false understanding of the clergy's message. They argue most effectively when they evaluate the evolution of religious thought in colonial America.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless these sermons clearly provide valuable insights into the evolution of the colonial community's attitudes toward the soldier, and his role in the political environment of the years before the American Revolution. When the colonial ministers preached, they expressed their own hopes and fears and those of their communities.<sup>9</sup>

## The Demand For A Militia

In 1763, at the end of the French and Indian Wars, the Reverend Thomas Balch warned his militia audience not to "beat our Swords into Plowshares and our spears into Pruning Hooks." With this declaration, he echoed the sentiments of many clergy who, before and after him, had no doubt that the soldier ought to continue to prepare for war. The clergy saw mankind itself as corrupt, and this view of humanity provided the moral basis for soldiering.<sup>10</sup> The clergy also knew that the increasing wealth and prosperity of the colonies would cause many to "form deep plots against us, and endeavor to put them into execution at the point of the sword."<sup>11</sup> After all, the clergy had learned from history that men "in every age have corrupted themselves, renounced their allegiance to the supreme ruler, and unswervingly endeavored to plunder, enslave, and destroy their own species."<sup>12</sup> Another concern, beyond the economic and political well being of the colonies, motivated the clergy. They also knew that the religious freedoms of the colonies, so recently protected from the "popish tyranny" of the French, would soon be challenged again. They told their militia audiences that the enemies of God's Church never rest and that they must be prepared to defend not only political, but also religious freedoms.<sup>13</sup>

The clergy's vision of this dual challenge to political and

sermon of Samuel Davies whose two sermons preached in 1755 and 1757 in Virginia were printed in London, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston.

<sup>8</sup> Stout, *The New England Soul*, 4, 6.

<sup>9</sup> Headley, *Chaplains*, 56-57.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Balch *A Sermon Preached to the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company at Boston, June 6, 1763* (Boston: Edes and Gill, 1763) 34. Evans 9331.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 37.

<sup>12</sup> Daniel Shute *A Sermon Preached to the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company in Boston, New-England June 1, 1767* (Boston: Edes and Gill, 1767), 15 Evans 10768.

<sup>13</sup> Elisha Fish *The Art of War Lawful, and Necessary for a Christian People* (Boston: Thomas and John Fleet, 1774), 10-1 2. Evans 13276.

religious liberty made the life of a Christian and a soldier synonymous in the colonies. The clergy justified their stand with examples from both the Old and New Testament. In 1768, the Reverend Jonas Clarke called on the colonial soldier to consider “a careful imitation of the illustrious example of [the Biblical King] Jehoshaphat” who established his kingdom’s defense as his first priority when he assumed the throne.<sup>14</sup> Other ministers who also sought to justify the soldier’s life often cited John the Baptist’s injunctions to the soldiers contained in *Luke 3:14*, as both approving and defining the soldier’s profession.<sup>15</sup>

Though these ministers approved of soldiers, many did not accept the British crown’s permanently stationing British Regulars in the colonies. On the other hand some clergymen, such as the Reverend Eli Forbes, desired that America rely on British troops and questioned whether the colonies would be able to field an effective army “considering the infancy of the country; the vast demand of laborers in the arts of agriculture and trade; and the very little use we ever had for regular troops on this continent, till the last war.”<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, most clergymen wanted the protectors of their liberties to be militiamen. Their demands did not stem from a concern for the bravery and expertise of the British regulars. Many admitted willingly the technical superiority of the British soldier. However, they also voiced the opinion that “mercenary troops . . . are not in general possessed of those sentiments which ennoble human nature . . .” and therefore should not be relied on for defense.<sup>17</sup> Incidents such as the Boston Massacre in 1770 only increased such sentiments and strengthened the clergy’s message that “it is fit that a people should be possessed of them [weapons], and in times of peace prepare for war.”<sup>18</sup> Only a trained militia could provide the colonies with such an instrument before the war’s beginning.

During the interwar period, as the clergy voiced the dominant role that they wished the militia to play, they hoped to stimulate their audiences’ military preparation. The destruction of the French in Canada along with their Indian allies during the past war had elimin-

<sup>14</sup> Jonas Clarke *The Importance of Military Skill, Measures for Defence and a Martial Spirit, in a Time of Peace: A Sermon Preached to the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company in Boston, New-England June 1, 1768* (Boston: Kneeland and Adams, 1768), 7. Evans 10856.

<sup>15</sup> Elisha Fish *The Art of War Lawful*, 6; Nathaniel Robbins *Jerusalem’s Peace Wished: A Sermon Preached to the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company in Boston, New-England June 1, 1768* (Boston: J. Boyles, 1772), 15-16; Evans 12545.

<sup>16</sup> Eli Forbes *The Dignity and Importance of the Military Character illustrated, A Sermon Preached to the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company in Boston, New-England June 3, 1771* (Boston: Richard Draper, 1771), i-ii; Evans 12044.

<sup>17</sup> John Lathrop *A Sermon Preached to the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company in Boston, New-England June 6, 1774* (Boston: Kneeland and Davis, 1774), 36. Evans 13371.

<sup>18</sup> Shute *A Sermon Preached 1767*, 28.

ated the last major threat which the colonist feared in North America. Militias in colonial America frequently lost their proficiency after a perceived threat disappeared.<sup>19</sup> Erratic performance and variable standards for militia training worried the clergy. They wanted the militia prepared so that the “state should be able in every emergency to send an army of well disciplined troops, men of valour, expert in war” to repel any enemy threat.<sup>20</sup>

According to the way the clergy perceived the severity of the current threat to the colonies, they took a variety of approaches regarding the soldier’s preparation. For example, immediately after the war in 1763, the Reverend Thomas Balch merely wondered in his sermon “how impolitic, how unsafe, how dishonorable” the loss of military skill would be.<sup>21</sup> The Reverend Daniel Shute, pastor of the Third Church of Hingham, Massachusetts, pleaded in 1767 that since the military life was not a natural state, “the art of war should be cultivated.”<sup>22</sup> However when the British troops occupied Boston and killed colonists during the Boston Massacre, the pleas became more demanding. The Reverend Samuel Stillman in 1770 and the Reverend Eli Forbes in 1771 openly condemned their militias for poor readiness; and both clergymen demanded that the soldier properly attend to training. In 1772, Nathaniel Robbins tried to encourage the militiaman’s training by reminding him that the declining “martial spirit” of the Romans ultimately led to their destruction.<sup>23</sup>

## The Creation Of An Image

During the interwar period, the clergy continued to build a special image for the soldier of the colonies. The clergy were not merely satisfied to possess a well disciplined militiaman; they demanded that the soldier of the New World possess special moral and ethical qualities. Frequently in their sermons, the ministers reminded the colonists that they possessed a special covenant relationship with God and that they were privileged to live in the New Jerusalem. In sermons to militia audiences the clergy reinforced this theme to the soldier.<sup>24</sup> To maintain this relationship they demanded that their soldier be a faithful and devout Protestant Christian. The militiamen were seen to fight not only for a political community, but also to fight God’s spiritual battles in his chosen land.

<sup>19</sup> Russel B. Weigley *History of the United States Army* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1967), 1-12.

<sup>20</sup> Forbes, *The Dignity and Importance of the Military Character illustrated*, i-ii.

<sup>21</sup> Balch, *A Sermon Preached 1763*, 34.

<sup>22</sup> Shute, *A Sermon Preached 1767*, 28.

<sup>23</sup> Samuel Stillman *A Sermon Preached to the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company in Boston, New England June 4, 1770* (Boston: Eades and Gill, 1774), 23-26 Evans 11872; Forbes, *The Dignity and Importance of the Military Character*, i-ii; Robbins, *Jerusalem’s Peace Wished*, 14.

<sup>24</sup> Stout, *The New England Soul*, 6-7; Robbins, *Jerusalem’s Peace Wished*, 10-11.

All clergy expected the soldier to behave religiously and to seek the Lord's intervention in his life. They told their congregations and the soldiers that God would help the moral and righteous with divine influence during war provided that it be a just war.<sup>25</sup> The soldier could not be motivated by revenge or hatred, and he would have to defend and never attack. If he abided by God's laws, he could expect divine help.<sup>26</sup> The ministers told the soldier in sermons on numerous occasions that God was the source of all skill, often quoting the Psalm verse that reads, "Blessed be the Lord, my strength who teaches my hands to war and my fingers to fight."<sup>27</sup> Additionally, the clergy hoped that the soldier, if concerned with his afterlife, would be less likely corrupted by the promises of earthly rewards. The clergy, as well as the people, feared that "in armies persons are apt to take a more Licentious liberty, and have many bad examples and temptation to sin."<sup>28</sup>

Ministers clearly stated specific qualities which they wished to see in a soldier. The characteristics which these ministers desired in the 1760s and 1770s echoed similar demands of the ministers who had preached in the 1740s and 1750s. In 1770, the Reverend Samuel Stillman prepared the comprehensive discourse on this subject. In a sermon Stillman preached to the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company of Boston, he identified eight qualities which he believed applied "both to him who commands, and those who obey."<sup>29</sup> Stillman voiced five qualities which could have applied to a soldier of any army of the time. Every soldier must possess loyalty to a prince, "whose reign is distinguished by equity and moderation . . ." Each soldier should develop a knowledge of the art of war appropriate to his rank. Stillman also demanded that each soldier act with secrecy and dispatch and display a readiness to endure hardships in the

<sup>25</sup> Shute *A Sermon Preached 1767*, 34-35.

<sup>26</sup> Jason Haven *A Sermon Preached to the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company in Boston, New England June 4, 1761* (Boston: Eades and Gill, 1761), 20; Evans 8878; William Hobby *The Soldier Caution'd: A Sermon Preached to the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company in Boston, New England June 4, 1761* (Boston: J. Draper, 1747), 12, Evans 5969; Shute, *A Sermon Preached 1767*, 21.

<sup>27</sup> Elias Smith "A Sermon Preached May 14, 1775" in *Family Gatherings*, William C. Endicott, Jr., ed. (Danvers, Massachusetts: N.P., 1929), 80. Smith's sermon appears to be a verbatim plagiarism of James Cogswell sermon, *God the Pious Soldier's Strength and Instructor* (Boston: John Draper, 1757), Evans 7874; Abiel Leonard *A Prayer, Composed for the Benefit of the Soldierly, in the American Army, To assist them in their private Devotions; and recommended to their particular Use* (Cambridge: S & E Hall, 1775), 5. Evans 14156. In some of the footnotes the reference to Evans indicates the number of the sermon contained in the series, Early American Imprints to 1800. See James K. Skipton and James E. Mooney *National Index of American Imprints Through 1800, The Short Titled Evans* (Worcester, Massachusetts: American Antiquarian Society and Barre Publishers, 1969).

<sup>28</sup> William Russell *The Duty of an Army of Professing Christians, when going forth against the Enemies* (New London: Timothy Green, 1760), 13.

<sup>29</sup> Stillman, *A Sermon Preached 1770*, 7.



performance of his duties. Finally, he wanted each soldier to possess fortitude—a quality which differed from mere physical courage. To him, as other ministers, physical courage would fail in combat because those who possess it, like animals, would fear the unknown. They wanted the soldier, but especially the commander, to possess true fortitude, “a moral virtue, by which man is enabled to keep possession of himself in a time of threatening difficulty, and to act according to the dictates of reason.”<sup>30</sup>

In his sermon, Stillman also voiced three qualities which might be considered uniquely American. Reflecting a concern for the threat of standing army to liberty, he wanted the soldier always to be subordinate to the civil powers, because “without such subordination, neither the state nor the militia could ever be in a reputable circumstance,” Secondly, Stillman demanded that the American soldier act without cruelty. He believed that “the men of the sword are to defend, not to destroy their fellow-subjects; to secure, not to waste their property.” Lastly he echoed a previously mentioned desire—his soldiers should be religious and “seek the direction of heaven when about to engage in war.”<sup>31</sup> Other ministers were to echo Stillman with similar demands in the years to come.

Occasionally, when the clergy defined the traits which they wished to see in the soldier, they specified characteristics by rank. To the enlisted soldier, the ministers generally stressed obedience to their commanders. They argued before the troops that the militia leaders sought these positions because they possessed public virtue.<sup>32</sup> They reminded the enlisted soldier that “the gentlemen who command you are your neighbors, friends and Fellow citizens . . . Their authority has not been imposed on you. They were invested with it by yourselves. . . .”<sup>33</sup> When addressing the officers they demanded, in addition to tactical proficiency, that they conduct themselves as bravely as General Wolfe and Amherst had in the French and Indian War and that they act as role models for the men who had enlisted in God’s army.<sup>34</sup>

## The Clergy And The Logic Of Rebellion

While their sermons distributed the Revolution’s propaganda, the clergy led the people towards rebellion. The historian Perry Miller has claimed that the political and religious message of these ministers

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 7, 12, 17, 14, 9, 10.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 15, 17, 18.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 15-16.

<sup>33</sup> Jacob Duche *The Duty of Standing Fast in Our Spiritual and Temporal Liberties* (Philadelphia: James Humphreys, 1775) 20.

<sup>34</sup> Stillman, *A Sermon Preached 1770*, 12; Robbins, *Jerusalem’s Peace Wished*, 13; Jehu Minor *A Military Discourse, Wherein Is Considered the Origins of War* (New Haven: Thomas and Samuel Green, 1774), 13.

carried the militia forward to war.<sup>35</sup> Before the outbreak of the rebellion, the British themselves acknowledged the power of the pulpit. In 1774, an American and colonial governor of Massachusetts, Thomas Hutchinson, refused an assembly request for a fast day for he knew that “the request was only to give an opportunity for sedition to flow from the pulpit.”<sup>36</sup> The clergy gained this great influence because they were among the best educated and most articulate of the colonial population. Their position within the community also provided for them a powerful audience and forum which groups frequently sought to aid their own causes.<sup>37</sup>

Before the end of the French and Indian Wars, the clergy considered the Catholic French and their Indian allies as the greatest threat to their freedoms. The ministers called on the soldier to defend against “the human monsters [which are] hounded out against us” and prepared to destroy the religion, commerce, virtue, and liberty of the protestant colonies of America.<sup>38</sup> The ministers recognized that the French endangered the civil and economic freedoms of the colonies, but for most, the most serious threat was to the Protestant religion. Clergy such as the Reverend Samuel Davies of Virginia told his militia audience that the enemy “would tear from our eager Grasp the most valuable Blessing of Heaven . . . our religion,” and this the soldier must be willing to preserve.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, when the people called the soldier to arms against the most serious threat, they still required him to fight a just war. The ministers told the colonists and the soldier that they could not go into battle to seek to enlarge the Empire. Instead, the soldier must fight a defensive battle and insure God’s continued favor because “a just war is rather to be chosen, that an unjust peace.”<sup>40</sup>

The French defeat and expulsion from Canada created conditions which allowed the evolution of the clergy’s concept of liberty. In 1763, King George III decided to keep British regulars in the colonies to satisfy domestic political considerations, to contain the French who remained in the New World, and to prevent further colonial encroachment on Indian lands.<sup>41</sup> Simultaneously, the clergy

<sup>35</sup> Miller, “Religion as a Revolutionary Ideology” 39.

<sup>36</sup> Headley, *Chaplains and Clergy* 59.

<sup>37</sup> Schlesinger *Prelude To Independence: The Newspaper War on Britain* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1980), 11; Headley, *Chaplains and Clergy*, iii.

<sup>38</sup> William Smith *The Christian Soldier’s Duty; The Lawfulness and Dignity of his Office; and the Importance of the Protestant Cause in the British Colonies, Stated and Explained* (Philadelphia: James Chatten, 1757), 27-28. Evans 8042.

<sup>39</sup> Samuel Davies *The Curse of Cowardice* (London: Printed. Woodbridge, Pennsylvania: James Parker, 1759) 1. Evans 8333. This sermon was also reprinted in New York, Evans 8334; Philadelphia, Evans 8335; Boston, Evans 8336.

<sup>40</sup> Isaac Stile *The Character and Duty of Soldiers Illustrated* (New Haven James Parker, 1755), 5; Evans 7576; Samuel Bird *The Importance of the Divine Presence with our Host* (New Haven: James Parker, 1759), 3; Evans 8299.

<sup>41</sup> See John Shy *Towards Lexington: The Role of the British Army in the*

lost the division between the religious kingdom of God and the political New England community. The hope that a millennium of political and religious freedoms would soon occur in the New World captured the imagination. In 1764, to provide monies to pay for the British soldiers in North America, Parliament voted to reassert their perceived right to tax the colonies. The clergy in sermons before the soldier responded to this challenge and expanded their definition of liberty and redefined the threat to American liberties.<sup>42</sup> Often they took their new definition of liberty from the most radical Whig politicians of Great Britain.

However, the ministers responded slowly to the increasing evidence of a British conspiracy against their liberties and did not rush the soldier into rebellion. In sermons to militias before 1763, the clergy seldom had defined liberty in the manner that they would in the late 1760s and into the 1770s. During the 1750s some ministers voiced a belief that the soldier must preserve the people's liberty, "one of the most sacred and inviolable Privileges man enjoys."<sup>43</sup> However, they seldom couched the concept of liberty in purely political terms. The clergy, when they did highlight a threat to liberty, most frequently feared that some power would threaten their "privileges civil and sacred."<sup>44</sup> Additionally, they wanted the people to respect and obey their princes and governors, and the soldiers to react to their leaders' demands. Many clergy saw at first great good in the past relationship with Britain. The Reverend Jonas Clarke, in 1768, compared King George to King Jehoshaphat, the great leader of the Israelites and a defender of their security. Eli Forbes in 1771 dedicated his sermon to Thomas Hutchinson, the royal governor of Massachusetts, who by 1774 would be the symbol of British tyranny. Even as late as June 1775, Abiel Leonard composed a prayer which "hoped that the Britons and Americans may again rejoice in the King as minister of God to both for good."<sup>45</sup>

In the latter half of the 1760s the clergy in their militia sermons identified a new threat to American liberty—power. Using the theory of natural rights, they explained in their sermons that each person possessed the privileges of life, liberty, and property. These ministers argued that these freedoms could not be forfeited because they were "counted to the Constitution of God" and that each individual ought to possess enough power to secure these freedoms.

*Coming of the American Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965) for a fuller explanation.

<sup>42</sup> Hatch, "Origins," 511, 516.

<sup>43</sup> Cogswell, *God the Pious Soldier's Strength*, 11.

<sup>44</sup> William McClenachan *The Christian Warriour* (Boston, D. Gookin, 1745), 2. Evans 5622.

<sup>45</sup> Balch, *A Sermon Preached 1763*, 26; Clarke, *The Importance of Military Skill* 7; Forbes *The Dignity and Importance of the Military Character*, i; Leonard, *A Prayer*, 7.

The radical whigs defined this power as liberty.<sup>46</sup> The clergy also explained that individuals had created societies to secure their freedoms and had temporarily invested rulers or kings with some of their power to defend their remaining liberty.<sup>47</sup> Power, unfortunately, tended to corrupt and create an appetite for more power which the clergy claimed “blinds the individual to passion and suppresses Liberty.” Therefore, they argued that the people must be ever vigilant, because attempts would continually be made to threaten their remaining rights.<sup>48</sup>

Relations between the colonists and the British continued to sour during the late 1760s and into the early 1770s. The British Parliament continued to assert its right to tax and control the colonies while the colonists fought to preserve what they interpreted as their sacred and constitutional rights. The disassembly of the New York legislature and removal of local control over many court officials concerned the citizenry. However, after 1768 the presence of British troops in the cities perhaps most seriously aggravated the colonists. American Whigs, among whom most ministers stood, tended to see a standing army as the greatest threat to liberty. The Boston Massacre in 1770 tended to confirm their worst fears.<sup>49</sup>

As these relations between the British authority and the Americans continued to deteriorate, the clergy increased the rhetoric of liberty in the sermons they preached before militias. In May 1773, Elisha Fish asked the militia of Upton, Massachusetts, “if it be in the nature and reason of things lawful for Christians to enjoy their lives, liberties and property, it must be lawful, in the same nature and reason of things, to use the means necessary to defend and preserve these enjoyments.”<sup>50</sup> Several weeks later, the Reverend Simeon Howard warned the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company that they should no longer consider France or Spain as the most serious threat to American liberties. He warned them that “Things may soon be in such a situation with Great Britain, that it will be no longer proper for us to confide in her power for the protection of our liberty.” He then demanded that the soldier “standfast therefore in Liberty where God hath made us free.”<sup>51</sup>

By 1774 the clergy more stridently called the soldier to arms and challenged what they believed was a corrupt and law breaking

<sup>46</sup> Gordon S. Wood *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972), 21.

<sup>47</sup> Clarke *The Importance of Military Skill*, 19.

<sup>48</sup> Shute, *A Sermon Preached 1767*, 14, 19.

<sup>49</sup> See Benard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1982) for a fuller discussion of these issues.

<sup>50</sup> Fish, *The Art of War Lawful*, 6.

<sup>51</sup> Simeon Howard *A Sermon Preached to the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company, in Boston, New England, June 7th, 1773* (Boston: John Boyles, 1773), 8; Evans 12813.

British leadership. Though they often did not mention the King or his ministers by name in their sermons, they clearly implied the enemy. In May, the Reverend Jehu Minor preached to companies of Connecticut militia that in all ages the lust for power has made men “aspire to be Lords of all this terrestrial Globe; nay may I add, they aspire to be Gods. From hence . . . they have gathered all their forces and Strength for War, to Kill and destroy their Fellow-men . . .” He then told his audience that “there may be just Occasions at this day for a kingdom to rise up for the Defence of their just Rights and Privileges . . .”<sup>52</sup> John Lathrop before a Massachusetts militia soon echoed this theme. Alluding to the colonists’ perceptions of constitutional violations, he claimed that Christians “have natural rights as well as other men, and it can be no less their duty to defend those rights against the encroachment of tyrants and oppressors . . .” He then stated that “Christian[s] ought to unsheathe the sword and resist unto blood . . . when those who are in government violate the laws they had sworn to maintain, and attempt to oppress and enslave the people whom they had sworn to defend.”<sup>53</sup> By March 1775 relations had become so bad that the Reverend William Emerson of Concord, Massachusetts called on his militia to “take the Helmet, shield and Buckler and put on the Brigandine.”<sup>54</sup>

## Conclusion

The clergy’s use of the rhetoric of liberty and its influence on the soldier can be seen at the very beginning of the revolution. On April 19, 1775, some 700 British regulars under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Francis Smith and Major John Pitcairn marched from Boston to seize military stores hidden at the nearby towns of Lexington and Concord. They expected the mission to proceed smoothly and without incident. At Lexington, however, they met the town’s militia formed under Captain John Parker and a skirmish ensued during which several colonists were shot. News of the incident rapidly spread throughout the area, and by the time the British had reached Concord, more than 400 militiamen were assembled to fight. As the militiamen formed to meet the British enemy, the Reverend William Emerson reminded them that God was on their side.<sup>55</sup> After another brief fight, the British withdrew towards Boston as more than 4,000 colonists from 23 towns responded to the call to arms. Frequently it was ministers and clergy who provoked this popular response.

Within the new few months the colonists in New England committed themselves to raising more than 21,000 troops to serve

<sup>52</sup> Minor, *A Military Discourse*, 6, 8.

<sup>53</sup> Lathrop, *A Sermon Preached 1774*, 14, 6.

<sup>54</sup> Thompson, *From Its European Antecedents*, 91.

<sup>55</sup> Honeywell, *Chaplains*, 49.

both their God and their people at the siege at Boston. Elsewhere, local governments prepared themselves for the coming war by organizing militias. In Virginia, local militiamen sieged the gunpowder stores of Lord Dunmore, the Royal governor at Williamsburg; in Gaysboro, Vermont, the Reverend David Avery led a contingent of the town's men to join the army.<sup>56</sup>

During the war, the clergy's message sustained the soldier's fighting spirit. Though many ministers hoped that the King would see the errors of his cabinet ministers, they were committed to defend the civil and religious liberty of their people.<sup>57</sup> As Charles Royster points out in *A Revolutionary People at War*, the soldier's prewar commitment to this struggle, which the clergy so strongly developed, carried many through the first year and a half of the war.<sup>58</sup> The two official histories of the Chaplain Corps describe how the ministers helped maintain the soldier's commitment. Those clergy who volunteered and faithfully served, such as the Reverend Israel Evans, performed a critical role in the service of this new country. They reminded the troops in their sermons that they were the "guardians of Liberty . . . the heroes of the present age."<sup>59</sup>

Those who argue that the clergy failed because the wartime soldier violated specific injunctions against profanity or gambling, or because the troops frequently missed services, miss the significance of the clergy's prewar message. The clergy of that time were idealistic, and they spoke of the ideal. The soldier of the period recognized that the ideal, while impossible to consistently sustain, remained the norm against which all his efforts would be measured.<sup>60</sup> A perusal of Washington's General Orders suggests how fully he assimilated the prewar concepts of the ministers. He often echoed their earlier messages and constantly enjoined his soldiers to meet their challenge. He reminded them that they fought for the people against the iron hand of tyranny.<sup>61</sup> In 1783 at the end of the war when many soldiers peacefully left camp without pay and with little hope of collecting it,

<sup>56</sup> See Willard M. Wallace *Appeal to Arms: A Military History of the American Revolution* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951) for a fuller explanation of the war's beginning months. Albanese, *Sons of Fathers: The Civil Religion of the American Revolution* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976), 102.

<sup>57</sup> Leonard, *A Prayer*, 7.

<sup>58</sup> Royster, *Revolutionary People at War*, Chapter 1-2.

<sup>59</sup> Israel Evans *A Discourse Delivered at Easton, on the 17th of October 1779, to the Officers and Soldiers of the Western Army, After their Return from an Expedition against the Five Nations of Hostile Indians* (Philadelphia: Thomas Bradford, 1779), 27-8.

<sup>60</sup> Royster, *Revolutionary People at War*, 169.

<sup>61</sup> For examples see Orders dated March 3, 1776, volume 4, page 364; and Orders dated June through November 1780 which employed passwords such as freedom and courage, volume 18-20. John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington From the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1931-1944).

their actions stood in stark contrast to the soldiers earlier in the war who mutinied for back pay. This serves to illustrate the integration of the values of self-sacrifice consistently preached by the clergy. The soldiers left believing that they were true to the Revolution's ideals.<sup>62</sup>

After the war these attitudes still maintained; these values kept their power. In May 1783, Washington proposed his "Sentiments on a Peace Establishment." In the document he asked for a standing army to garrison West Point and other key posts. As he defended his small request for a band of regulars, he sought to counter civilian fears that echoed earlier ministers' pronouncements. He claimed that "Altho' a large standing Army in time of Peace hath ever been considered dangerous to the liberties of a Country, yet a few Troops, under certain circumstances, are not only safe, but indispensable." He recognized, however, that the nation's defense would have to rest on a militia and that the militia was the "great Bulwark of our liberties." <sup>63</sup> Later that month, when officers created the Society of Cincinnatus to continue the bonds and associations begun during the war, the public reacted adversely. They viewed the organization as the seed for new corruption of the American people. Thomas Jefferson commented to Washington that the association might subvert liberty because it was hostile to man's natural equality. The public cried out using words and ideas similar to the clergy's prewar rhetoric regarding a standing army and its corrupt nature. Their voice was loud enough to cause the members to wear the distinctive badge of the society only on days of meeting and at members' funerals to avoid their being labeled corrupt.<sup>64</sup>

The prewar words of the clergy found their way into the Constitutional debates of 1787. The Whigs who opposed the constitution often argued that its provision for a standing army and the federal government's potential control of the militia might threaten liberty by giving the central government too much power. The Whigs proposed that the people maintain their virtue and rely solely on a militia. Even when the Federalists debated the merits of the Constitution with the Whigs, they seldom questioned the value and importance of the militia. James Madison, a leading Federalist, admitted during debates on the need for the new constitution that a good militia did check the threat of a standing army.<sup>65</sup> They claimed, however, that the new constitution adequately checked the potential for abuse of power. The legacy of the clergy's prewar message

<sup>62</sup> Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 341-343.

<sup>63</sup> Fitzpatrick, *The Writings of Washington*, volume 26, 388.

<sup>64</sup> Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War*, 354-357.

<sup>65</sup> Robert A. Rutland, ed. *The Papers of James Madison* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), vol. 10, 156, n 1.

contributed to the forces which ultimately caused the Federalists to compromise and to accept the Bill of Rights as a limitation on the power of the central government.



# **Our Roots For Ministry The Continental Army, General Washington, And The Free Exercise Of Religion**

**John W. Brinsfield**

The support that Army chaplains have given to the free exercise of religion in the military has generally corresponded well with the intent of the Founding Fathers and the Constitution of the United States. Yet the historical roots of the chaplains' support for free exercise of religion in the Army did not originate in colonial charters, provincial statutes, or even in the Constitution itself. Long before the Constitution was framed, a distinct tradition of free exercise of religion developed within the Army by necessity. The pattern for chaplain ministry to soldiers of different religious backgrounds was set in the seventeenth century, from the time the first militia units drilled at Jamestown, Plymouth, Boston and New York.

William Strachey, secretary to Lord De La Warr, the Governor General of Virginia, wrote in 1612 that the Jamestown colony was organized according to strict military discipline. The men marched by drum beat into the fields twice a day to work; but also twice a day, led by the Captain of the Watch, they said prayers for the welfare of the colony and the King; and on Sundays and Wednesdays they heard

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Chaplain (Major) John W. Brinsfield is assigned to the Department of Military Ministry, Pastoral Ministries Division, at the U.S. Army Chaplain School. He is a United Methodist from the North Georgia Conference. He is a graduate of Yale Divinity School and holds a Ph.D. in Church History from Emory University and a D. Min. in Ethics from Drew Theological Seminary. Chaplain Brinsfield is the author of *Religion and Politics in Colonial South Carolina* and numerous articles on the history and the ethics of war.

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sermons from their beloved minister.<sup>1</sup> Though in 1607 the Jamestown settlers had only one chaplain, a priest of the Church of England, his ministry included all who called upon him for help.

In New York in 1687, at the fort on Manhattan Island, the soldiers in garrison were served by “a chaplain belonging to the Fort, of the Church of England; secondly a Dutch Calvinist, thirdly a French Calvinist, and fourthly a Dutch Lutheran.” The Governor of New York, Colonel Thomas Dongan, reported in this way to King James II:

Here be not many of the Church of England; a few Roman Catholics; abundance of Quaker Preachers, men and women especially; Singing Quakers, Ranting Quakers; Sabbatarians; Anti-Sabbatarians; some Ana-Baptists; some Jews; in short of all sorts of opinion there are some, and the most part none at all.<sup>2</sup>

King James instructed Colonel Dongan to permit these sundry people to worship without disturbance as far as possible, “in ye free Exercise of their Religion.”<sup>3</sup> In 1732 King George II likewise instructed General James Oglethorpe, the founder of the colony of Georgia, “to provide for liberty of conscience . . . in the worship of God, to all persons resident within our said province, and that all persons, except papists, shall have free exercise of their religion.”<sup>4</sup>

While it is true that most colonial governors and assemblies in America were Protestant by law and tradition, and thus were not entirely inclusive in granting free exercise of religion to the soldiers in their militia units, most colonial chaplains ministered to the troops, camp followers, foreigners, prisoners of war, and even friendly Indians without denominational prejudice. In the main, a larger measure of toleration, if not complete free exercise, existed in the militia units than in the civilian societies from which they were drawn. Legislative assemblies could debate partisan issues of politics and religion, but the military had to be unified and undistracted as far as possible by differences in matters of private conscience.

## The Continental Army

With the advent of the American Revolution, Congress chartered the U.S. Army chaplaincy and charged it with serving a military force

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Oxford History of the American People* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), 51. See also Parker C. Thompson, *From Its European Antecedents to 1791: The Chief of Army Chaplains*, 1978), 5-6, and William Strachey, *Lawes Divine, Moral and Marital* (London: Walter Burre, 1612), 16.

<sup>2</sup> Anson Phelps Stokes, *Church and State in the United States* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1950) I, 166-167.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 439.

composed of soldiers of many different religious denominations and a large number with no professed faith at all. At the beginning of the American Revolution there were approximately 3,200 religious congregations in the thirteen colonies comprised of roughly eighteen denominations.<sup>5</sup> Ninety-eight per cent of the congregations were Protestant. The largest denominations were the Congregationalists with 668 churches, the Presbyterians with 588 churches, the Anglicans with 495 churches, and the Baptists with 494 churches. There were approximately 50 Roman Catholic congregations, mostly in the Mid-Atlantic states, and 5 Jewish congregations in New York, Charleston, Philadelphia, Newport and Savannah.<sup>6</sup> The population of the United States in 1775 was approximately 2,000,000, possibly 85% of which was composed of people who were not members of any religious society, church, or congregation.<sup>7</sup> The population was not religiously illiterate, however, for many cabins on the frontier held a Bible even when there was no church for the settlers to attend.

In order to provide for the free exercise of religion and denominational coverage in the Continental Army, therefore, the majority of chaplains should theoretically have been Congregational, Presbyterian, Anglican, and Baptist, with possibly the addition of one Roman Catholic priest and one rabbi. The actual figures for the 218 clergy who served in the American Revolution on the Patriot side, about ten percent of all the Protestant ministers in the colonies, show that the apportionment of chaplains to troops of like denomination was not far off except in the case of Congregational clergy who filled forty per cent of the chaplain slots.

Religious Organization	Congregation (Percentage of 3200)	Chaplain (Percentage of 218)
Congregationalist	668 (20%)	89 (40%)
Presbyterian	588 (18%)	37 (17%)
Anglican	495 (15%)	20 (10%)
Baptist	494 (15%)	12 (6%)
Reformed	279 (9%)	6 (3%)
Roman Catholic	50 (1%)	1 (3%)
Jewish	5 (.01%)	None known by name.

Since there was no establishment of any one denomination over another in the Army, and no chaplain endorsing agencies, the record largely reflects those clergy who accompanied their own parishioners into battle in “natural” fashion. This policy was especially costly for

<sup>5</sup> Thompson, 84.

<sup>6</sup> Thompson, 85. See also Abraham J. Karp, ed. *The Jewish Experience in America* (New York: KTAV Pub. Co., 1969). 402.

<sup>7</sup> Stokes, I, 229.

Father Louis Lotbiniere, a Roman Catholic priest from Canada, because he was excommunicated by his church authorities for serving Livingston's Regiment of American patriots.<sup>8</sup>

The distribution of chaplains in the Continental Army, too, tended to provide for denominational coverage and free exercise, although such coverage was not centrally directed. Chaplains who served at West Point from 1777 to 1782, for example, included John Gano, a Baptist in the 5th New York; Timothy Dwight, a Congregationalist in the Connecticut Brigade; John Mason, a Presbyterian in the 3rd New York; Abraham Baldwin, a Congregationalist in the 2nd Connecticut, and Israel Evans, a Presbyterian in the 1st New Hampshire.

## General Washington

The overall responsibility for the religious welfare of the Continental Army rested, of course, on the shoulders of General George Washington, whom George Mason of Virginia once called "an upstart surveyor."<sup>9</sup> Washington believed strongly in the righteousness of his cause and in the value of chaplains to encourage the soldiers in battle and to keep the Army moral thereafter. In the letters and papers of George Washington there are over fifty references to chaplains which testify to his esteem for chaplains and his reliance upon them.

Washington saw his chaplains fulfilling four distinct and important roles in the Army. The first role was to intercede with Providence to secure protection and victory for the soldiers, the officers, the Congress and the cause of American independence.

On July 9, 1776, Washington issued the following order to the Army:

The honorable Continental Congress having been pleased to allow a chaplain to each regiment, the colonels or commanding officers of each regiment are directed to procure chaplains accordingly, persons of good character and exemplary lives, and to see that all inferior officers and soldiers pay them a suitable respect. The blessing and protection of Heaven are at all times necessary, but especially so in times of public distress and danger. The General hopes and trusts, that every officer and man will endeavor to live and act as becomes a Christian soldier, defending the dearest rights and liberties of his country.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Thompson, 200.

<sup>9</sup> Morison, 313.

<sup>10</sup> Henry Whiting, ed., *Revolutionary Orders of General Washington* (London: Sparks and Sons, 1844), 74-75.

At Valley Forge in 1778 Washington repeated his wish that the Army should be a righteous one, for the “signal instances of Providential goodness which we have experienced, and which have almost crowned our arms with complete success, demand from us, in a peculiar manner, the warmest returns of gratitude and piety to the Supreme Author of all Good.” Washington directed his chaplains to perform Divine Services every Sunday at 11 o’clock, and he expected the officers “by their attendance to set an example to their men.” <sup>11</sup>

To be sure Washington gave Providence the credit for his victories and for the general blessings bestowed upon the nation, and he directed that most celebrations in the Army begin with a prayer or address by a chaplain. When the Declaration of Independence was read to the Continental Army in 1776, Washington had his chaplains offer prayers. When General Burgoyne surrendered his British force to General Gates at Saratoga in 1778, Washington asked his chaplains to give “short discourses.” When the French and Spanish became allies of the United States, Washington’s chaplains coordinated the victory celebration and parade; and when the Revolutionary War was over, Washington asked Chaplain John Gano to offer a prayer at New Windsor, New York, the last encampment of the Continental Army, before the troops were given an “extra ration of liquor.” <sup>12</sup>

The second role the chaplains were to perform was to be the conscience of the Army for moral reform. Washington had long been concerned not only for the moral health of the Army, but for the example the Army set for civilian supporters. Washington wrote to General William Smallwood of Maryland on May 26, 1777.

Let Vice and Immorality of Every Kind be discouraged, as much as possible, in your Brigade, and as a chaplain is allowed to each Regiment, see that the men regularly attend divine worship.

Washington ordered his chaplains to preach to one brigade at a time so that brigades without chaplains could hear a sermon. The men met formations under arms and marched to services where they heard sermons against swearing (which might offend Providence and cost them a victory), stealing (which was a serious breach of a Commandment from the Bible), and drunkenness (which was contrary to military law). With Washington’s complete approval, Chaplain John Mason of the 3rd New York preached throughout the Revolution on *Matthew 5:34*, “Swear Not At All.” <sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> J. T. Flexner, *George Washington in the American Revolution* (Boston: Little, Brown Co., 1967) 106, 245, 289.

<sup>13</sup> John Mason, “Sermons” United States Military Academy Archives, West Point, New York.

In addition to preaching for moral reform, when there were no other officers present, chaplains read the laws of land warfare to the soldiers. Colonel Aaron Barlow of the 5th Connecticut noted on July 1, 1775, that “Every Monday morning Paragraphs of the Military Law” related to soldiers were read to each company. Soldiers were not to pull down fences, fire weapons on the march, plunder or insult civilians, or “suffer any person to ease themselves except in the vaults prepared for that purpose.”<sup>14</sup> Evidently chaplains were concerned not only with a righteous and moral Army, but also with a healthy one.

The third function Washington felt was important for chaplains was that of morale support. At Valley Forge, in February, 1778, for example, 3,000 soldiers in the Army were on sick call, 4,000 men had no blankets, rations were reduced to one cup of flour, one pinch of salt, and lots of cold water; and 1,134 soldiers were listed as deserters. Over 1,500 horses had been slaughtered for food. Turnips bought from farmers cost \$1.50 a dozen when the daily pay for a private was about thirty cents.

In such conditions, Washington commended Chaplain Abiel Leonard for the 3rd Connecticut Regiment for taking pains “to animate the Soldiery and Impress them with a knowledge of the important rights as we are contending for . . . holding forth the Necessity of courage and bravery and at the same time of Obedience and Subordination to those in command.” General Henry Knox, who commanded Washington’s artillery said somewhat later,

Every legion must have a chaplain, of respectable talents and character, who, besides his religious functions, should impress on the minds of the youth at stated periods, in concise discourses, the eminent advantages of free governments to the happiness of society, and that such governments can only be supported by the knowledge, spirit, and virtuous conduct of the youth—to be illustrated by the most conspicuous examples in history.<sup>15</sup>

Chaplains, in short, had an important role to play in persuading the troops to remain at their posts during trying times.

## Free Exercise

The fourth function that Washington assigned to his chaplains was to increase unity and harmony among the soldiers. On some occasions this included helping the men avoid religious disputes by exercising their religious faith as freely as possible. In 1777 Washington was

<sup>14</sup> Colonel Aaron Barlow’s “Book of Orders” Rare Book Collection, U.S. Military Academy Library, West Point, New York.

<sup>15</sup> Thompson, 221.

asked if he favored one chaplain per brigade or one chaplain per regiment. Washington replied that he preferred regimental chaplains because it “gives every Regiment an Opportunity of having a chaplain of their own religious Sentiments, it is founded on a plan of a more generous toleration.”<sup>16</sup>

This was not just a passing comment, for Washington realized early in the war that he commanded not just an American army but an allied military force with a strong Roman Catholic element and a small, but important “Hebrew” presence. One historian has noted that thirty-eight per cent of Washington’s troops had Irish surnames and thus the rank and file may have included more Roman Catholics than many scholars had previously realized.<sup>17</sup> The Marquis de Lafayette, Count Casimir Pulaski, Colonel Thaddeus Kosciuszko, Count Jean de Rochambeau, General Stephen Moyland, Captain Thomas Fitzsimmons, and the Comte de Grasse were all Roman Catholic officers serving in the American or French forces. With only one Catholic chaplain, many Catholic officers and soldiers served for years in the field without hearing Mass. Fortunately the French after 1778 contributed not only 30,000 soldiers but also 109 chaplains to minister to Roman Catholic troops where they could.<sup>18</sup>

Washington’s experience with officers and soldiers of Jewish background, including Major David Franks of General Arnold’s staff, contributed a great deal to his own conviction that a unified Army which practiced free exercise of religion could serve as a model of tolerance for the nation. When Congress circulated Rabbi Samuel Cohen’s sermon on *Numbers* 25:11-12, “A Covenant of Peace,” endorsed by the Reverend Ezra Stiles of Yale, to all the colonies, Washington had his chaplains read the sermon to the troops.<sup>19</sup> He was convinced, as was the Rabbi, that God gives peace and victory to the righteous.

At the regimental level, chaplains tried to minister to all of the religious needs of the men; but without priests, rabbis, or much literature to distribute to the soldiers, the job was difficult. Chaplains mainly had to depend on Scripture, sermons, prayers, addresses, and their presence on the battlefield, especially among the wounded and dying, to get their message across. Many of them, however, preached from Old Testament texts which ministered in some respect equally to Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. They also held collective Protestant worship services to cover as many denominations as possible.

<sup>16</sup> Stokes, I, 271.

<sup>17</sup> A. J. Nevins, *Our Catholic Heritage* (Huntington, Ind.: O. S. Visitor, Inc., 1972), 110.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>19</sup> Karp, 159.

The roles that General Washington assigned to his chaplains, then, were remarkably similar to the roles chaplains assume in the modern United States Army. The times have changed, but the pattern for ministry has not. Chaplains still have dual roles as religious leaders and staff officers, advising the commander on matters of religion, morals, and morale as affected by religion. Chaplains perform or provide religious services and Chaplain Support Activities and they facilitate the free exercise rights of all personnel regardless of the religious affiliation of either the chaplain or the unit member.<sup>20</sup>

It is not an accident that these functions have been codified in the Army for chaplains, for they represent a tradition which is older than the Constitution itself. The tradition of serving where the need is, to help unify and support the troops, has been passed along from chaplain to chaplain for over two hundred years.

## **Roots Entwined And United**

In 1790 President Washington wrote a memorable letter to the Hebrew Congregation at Newport, Rhode Island, the first colony to practice complete religious freedom in America. As former President of the Constitutional Convention of 1787, George Washington knew, of course, that the First Amendment guaranteeing the free exercise of religion had been drafted and passed by the Congress meeting in New York. As President of the United States, he wanted to assure all segments of the population that the liberal rights they had won so narrowly on the battlefield would be preserved by the new government. Washington told the Newport congregation,

The citizens of the United States of America . . . all possess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship. It is now no more that toleration is spoke of, as if it was by the indulgence of one class of people that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights. For happily the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens.<sup>21</sup>

It is noteworthy that Washington in his three roles as Commanding General of the Continental Army, President of the Constitutional Convention, and President of the United States, served to help unify Army traditions of free exercise of religion with those of the other Founding Fathers. Therefore the roots for ministry in the modern Army, found in the model for chaplains in the Continental Army, in

<sup>20</sup> Army Regulation 165-20, paragraphs 1-5, 1-9.

<sup>21</sup> Karp, 230.



the orders and directives of General George Washington, and in the Founding Fathers' guarantee for the free exercise of religion in the Constitution, came together to form one unified foundation for service to God and to a nation.

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# Balm In Gilead 1783-1791

Parker C. Thompson

December 7, 1783, found former Chaplain David Griffith officiating at a service of thanksgiving at the Anglican Church in Alexandria, Virginia. News arrived that the last Briton had left the shores of this now free and independent nation. The church, at his request, was festive in its decoration. Laurel and evergreen and house plants turned the sanctuary into a scene of living beauty not made with hands. Suspended above the pulpit was the figure of a white dove, an olive branch in its mouth. Peace and reconciliation had come by the Spirit of God! On either side of the chancel were the words of *Psalms* 29 and 85: "The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace," and "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." The solemnity of worship began with the singing of a hymn, especially composed for the occasion by the choir master, from *Psalms* 68: "Let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice. Sing unto God; sing praises unto his name; extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him." The rector's text, *Psalms* 128:6: "Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel." Behind him lay Valley Forge and Monmouth's carnage; before him, the future of a new nation.<sup>1 2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This article, dealing with the history of the military chaplaincy at the time of the Constitution, is taken from *The United States Army Chaplaincy*, "From Its European Antecedents to 1791."

<sup>2</sup> Daughters of The American Revolution Magazine, XLIV, January-June, 1914, 7.

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Chaplain (COL) C. Parker Thompson, USA, Ret., was endorsed as an Army chaplain by the Southern Baptist Convention. He entered active duty in 1952 and served on many posts stateside as well as in Korea, Germany and Vietnam. He was awarded the Legion of Merit, the Bronz Star Medal (Valor) with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, the Meritorious Service Medal, and the Purple Heart with One Oak Leaf Cluster.

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Like Reverend Griffith, the majority of chaplains returned after the Revolutionary War to their homes and congregations, to live out their lives in quiet, pastoral duties. Victory meant work, and peace was not merely the absence of war, but the task of building a nation among whom the Lord would be pleased to dwell.

Several chaplains greatly influenced education: Abraham Baldwin, Jeremy Belknap, Timothy Dwight, Andrew Hunter, Andrew Lee, John Mason, Benjamin Pomeroy, William Rogers, Elias Smith, Hezekiah Smith. The roster of schools where they served is impressive: the University of Georgia, Harvard, Yale, what is now the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, Princeton, Dartmouth, Phillips Andover Academy, the University of Pennsylvania, and Brown University. It is not surprising, education in that era being largely under the aegis of the churches.

In community activities, Enos Hitchcock was one of the founders of the Order of Cincinnati; Thomas Prentiss built the public library in Medfield, Massachusetts; Nicholas Cox was heavily involved in the work of the Masonic Lodge; Jeremy Belknap helped found the Massachusetts Historical Society; Ezra Sampson founded a newspaper.

Several found an outlet for their energies in mission societies and work; among them Gano, Hall, and Spring. Griffith and Robert Smith each assisted in the founding of the Protestant Episcopal Church, becoming bishops in Virginia and South Carolina respectively. Edmund Botsford authored the theological work, *The Spiritual Voyage*. Thomas Davis had the high distinction of officiating at President Washington's funeral.

Sadly, there were failures, too. Augustine Hibbard left both his calling and his country to live out his days as a minor government official in Canada. Joseph Swain lapsed into a chronic alcoholism following the death of his wife. William Bland was defrocked.

Government service captured either the full or part-time services of several former chaplains. Robert Andrews assisted in the surveying which extended the original Mason-Dixon Line, thereby clarifying the boundary between Virginia and Pennsylvania. Abraham Baldwin represented Georgia at the Federal Constitutional Convention and was a signatory of that instrument; later entered the practice of law, as did William Plumb, and as a diplomat served his nation well in Europe and during the naval war with the Barbary pirates. John Carnes became a Massachusetts state congressman and assisted in the ratification of the national Constitution at that state's convention, as did Gad Hitchcock. William Linn became the first chaplain to the U. S. House of Representatives, and John Reed represented Connecticut in that body. John Peter Tetard was an early translator for the embryonic State Department. Among his achievements was a rendering of the Articles of Confederation into French for world-wide

dissemination. Samuel West applied his talents to shaping Massachusetts' state constitution, and William Rogers served in the Pennsylvania Assembly.

The arts, too, found support in the poetry of Timothy Dwight and Joel Barrow. America is richer for the "Conquest of Canaan," "The Vision of Columbus," and "The Anarchiad."

Particular attention must be given to Manassah Cutler. What a renaissance man he was: theologian, scholar, educator, scientist, politician, physician, astronomer, botanist, lawyer, writer, and explorer. In addition to being a faithful and loyal pastor, he and Rufus Putnam formed the Ohio Company in 1787 for the purpose of colonizing the territory west of the Allegheny Mountains and north of the Ohio River. Back in Massachusetts, he served in the State House of Representatives in 1800, and in the Seventh and Eighth Congress. In 1937—the 150th anniversary of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787—he was honored by having his portrait on a U. S. Postal Stamp.

Two Revolutionary enlisted men are worthy of particular consideration. John Pittman, who guarded the bodies of those slain in the Boston Massacre, served as a private during the war. His post-war career found him a Baptist clergyman of exceptional ability and note. And, Lemuel Haynes, a Black soldier of 1775, served throughout the conflict. Becoming a Congregational minister of towering stature, he was called to become the pastor of an all white congregation in Torrington, Connecticut, in 1785.<sup>3</sup>

One major contribution made by the pluralistic military chaplaincy during the colonial wars and particularly during the Revolution to the life style of the new nation was in the area of religious toleration and the early budding of ecumenicity. Through the pressures of living and serving with men of different church affiliations, under the pressures of military operations, they embraced—perhaps grudgingly and slowly—a toleration in matters of religion which has become the rich fruit of our national life.

A veteran of King George's War and the Siege Line of Boston, Samuel Langdon preached a remarkable sermon in 1791, entitled "A Discourse on The Unity of the Church." It is doubtful if he could have composed such words prior to 1745. The former chaplain and President of Harvard proclaimed.

It is nowhere said in the new testament whether baptism shall be administered by dipping, or sprinkling; whether precomposed prayers shall be used in church, or such as are more unconfined, and express the desires of the church according to present varying circumstances;

<sup>3</sup> Alice Morse Earle, "A Baptist Preacher and Soldier of The Last Century," *New England Magazine*, New Series 12, March-August, 1895, 407-414. Herbert Aptheker, *Essays in The History of The American Negro*, International Publishers, N.Y., 1945, 102.

whether we must pray or receive the LORD'S supper kneeling; whether the churches shall be formed into dioceses, presbyteries, or associations, or ministers distinguished by graduations of honor according to their different gifts and qualifications. Therefore no wonder if christian professors have a diversity of sentiments and customs in all these respects, arising from different national habits and ideas of civil society. But so long as the grand doctrine of salvation only by JESUS CHRIST is continued, the true worship of the living GOD maintained according to his written word, and godliness and virtue practiced agreeably to CHRIST'S commands, and no decrees or rules made which in their nature or direct tendency subvert the express doctrines or laws of CHRIST, or exclude from christian charity and fellowship any whom CHRIST receives as his disciples, all the different parties and denominations of christians constitute but one church of the living GOD.<sup>4</sup>

While veterans of the Revolution grew elderly surrounded by admiring families and enjoying the fruits of victory, while former chaplains witnessed a phenomenal growth in their churches and a nation, which they helped bring into being, on the far frontier, there were still men fighting battles and standing guard wearing the uniform of the United States Army. And with them, of course, were chaplains. It is appropriate to briefly recount the struggles of nearly eight years to get a military force into being, and the chaplain's place in those frustrated efforts.

With the cessation of hostilities and independence anticipated daily in the spring of 1783, Congress appointed a committee to develop a concept for a peacetime military establishment. Logically they sought Washington's recommendations. Before replying, he in turn asked input from his trusted advisors. During the month of April, replies were received from Steuben, Gouvin, Huntington, Knox, Heath, Clinton, Pickering, and Putnam; Edward Hand's report is undated. As may be expected, these papers show original thinking, and range far and wide. Several contained ideas with slowly implemented but far-reaching effects, such as the establishment of a national military academy, the organization of a reserve officers corps, and the awarding of college degrees in military science from state schools. Rufus Putnam counseled that the army should consist of four regiments—three of infantry and one of artillery—and that each regiment should have its own chaplain. Further, with an eye to standardizing the militia organizations of several states, he offered a

<sup>4</sup> Samuel Langdon, "A Discourse on The Unity of The Church", preached at Portsmouth, October 12, 1791, by the Minister of the Gospel in Hampton Falls, New Hampshire. Printed at Exeter, by Henry Ronlet, 12-13. (Library of Congress).

plan having one chaplain's slot for every 1,175 officers and men.<sup>5</sup>

On May 2, 1783, Washington's proposal was drafted. He envisioned a national or continental force numbering 2,631 officers and men organized into four regiments of infantry (477 officers and men each) and an artillery regiment comprised of the remaining 723 personnel. There were to be five chaplains, one to be assigned to each regiment. Other than the artillery at West Point, the infantry units would be strategically stationed along the frontiers at Lake Champlain, Niagara, the Scioto-Sandusky area, and one in "the Southern and Western Boundaries of the Carolinas and Georgia." No doubt with the reality of distance to be reckoned with, he wrote: "The above establishment differs from the present one, in the following instances *viz.*, The exclusion of the light Company and reducing a sergeant and 18 Privates from each of the Battalion Companies, and giving a Chaplain to each Regiment instead of a Brigade." <sup>6</sup> Listing in diagram form the structure of each regiment's personnel, he lists the "Officers" in two categories: from colonel to ensigns in the infantry, and colonel to second lieutenants in the artillery by order of rank under the heading of "Commissioned." Under the designation "Staff," he lists—presumably in priority of position—"Chaplain, Adjutant, P. Master, Qr. Master, Surgeon, Mate." The assumption may be drawn that a chaplain in Washington's proposed army was an officer without rank, serving on the commander's staff, in the position of "first among equals." <sup>7</sup>

With some modifications, the Congressional committee—Ellsworth, Holten, Hamilton, Madison, and Wilson—proffered to Congress Washington's proposal. Regarding chaplains, they accepted his direction completely. Nothing, however, was done in Congress to bring this military force into being.<sup>8</sup>

Congressional action, or lack thereof, was predicated on the fear of a military establishment. Stating unequivocally its position, Congress reduced the once proud Continental Army to a house-keeping force, while looking to the several states for protection. The legislation of June 2, 1784, is appalling.

And whereas, standing armies in time of peace are inconsistent with the principles of republican governments, dangerous to the liberties of a free people, and generally converted into destructive engines for establishing despotism; It is therefore resolved, That recommendations in lieu of requisitions shall be sent to the several States for raising the troops which may be immediately

<sup>5</sup> Fitzpatrick, *Op. Cit.*, XXVI, 398. Honeywell, *Op. Cit.*, 75.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, Fitzpatrick, XXVI, 3890.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, XXVI, 378-379, 381.

<sup>8</sup> Honeywell, *Op. Cit.*, 76.

necessary for garrisoning the Western posts and guarding the magazines of the United States, unless, Congress should think it expedient to employ the Continental troops now at West Point in the service aforesaid;

Resolved, that the commanding officer be and he is hereby directed to discharge the troops now in the service of the United States, except twenty-five privates to guard the store at Fort Pitt and fifty-five to guard the stores at West Point and other magazines, with a proportionable number of officers, no officers to remain in service above the rank of captain.<sup>9</sup>

Experience proved the Congressional plan to be utterly unworkable. Besides depredations from the Indians on the frontiers, the specter of British, French, and Spanish involvement in American affairs could not be dismissed. In April, 1785, the 700 man militia force, which had been raised had its term of service extended to three years, and by October 1786, 1,340 additional enlisted men were authorized. The entire body was to be called a "legionary corps." Actually it was never fully implemented, remaining less than 1,000 men. Shay's Rebellion in Massachusetts in 1786 shook Congress terribly with the realization that to hope for tranquility does not bring that blessing into reality, that peace is not sustained by weakness. The 700 man force was voted the privilege of another three year enlistment. It was not until after the Constitution was adopted that a force of 1,216 enlisted men plus officers was authorized for a three year term of duty: April 30, 1790.<sup>10</sup>

Kentucky and Ohio were being drenched in blood. Governor St. Clair of the Northwest Territory raised a militia force of 1,100 men. General Harmar led this body, supplemented with 320 regulars, in July 1790, into the Maumee district where they suffered a crushing defeat. The general was exonerated from culpability "on account of the poor quality of his troops." <sup>11</sup>

Six months prior to the defeat of General Harmar's makeshift army, Henry Knox, then Secretary of War, proposed a plan to build a badly needed and efficient military organization. With the President's concurrence, it was forwarded to Congress. This plan called for self contained legions, each with a strength of 153 officers and 2,880 enlisted men. The commander of a legion was to hold the rank of major general, and on his staff were to be two aides, an inspector, and a chaplain. Knox then elaborated on his concept of a

<sup>9</sup> William A. Ganoe, *The History of The United States Army* (N.Y. and London: A. Appleton and Company, 1924), 90.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 92-95.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.



chaplain's duties, stating explicitly what many had done without directive.

Every legion must have a chaplain, of respectable talents and character, who, besides his religious functions, should impress on the minds of the youth, at stated periods, in concise discourses, the eminent advantages of free governments to the happiness of society, and that such governments can only be supported by the knowledge, spirit, and virtuous conduct of the youth—to be illustrated by the most conspicuous examples in history.<sup>12</sup>

On March 13, 1791, a second regiment of regulars was voted, and President Washington was authorized to send to the Senate his nominations. The following day, he responded by forwarding three names: Arthur St. Clair, to be a major general, Samuel Hodgdon, quartermaster, and John Hurt, chaplain.<sup>13</sup>

The latter was an Anglican from Virginia, a veteran chaplain with nearly seven years of service in the Revolution, and a former Prisoner of War. Interestingly, Hurt's appointment did not mention the job description proposed by Knox, concerning patriotic talks.

The beginning of the chaplaincy in the Regular Army of the United States dates from Hurt's appointment: March 4, 1791.

<sup>12</sup> *American State Papers, Documents, Legislative, and Executive of the Congress of The United States . . . Selected and edited under the Authority of Congress . . .* (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1832-1861), 1, 6-10, 824. *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical, Op. Cit.*, Series I, VI, 381-394.

<sup>13</sup> Fitzpatrick, *Op.Cit.*, XXXI, 228. Ganoe, *Op.Cit.*, 97.

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# Reflections On Religion And The Writing Of The Constitution

**Roger W. Pace**

Thomas Jefferson, U.S. Ambassador to France during the writing of the Constitution and not a Convention delegate himself, believed that no more elite group of men could have been gathered in North America than the signers of the U.S. Constitution. They may have been elite, but they nearly quit and disbanded early in the process. Delegate Benjamin Franklin was not a pessimist, but early in the Convention he lost hope of its success. Both James Madison and George Washington called the completion of the document “a miracle,” and in the eighteenth century when men such as Madison and Washington used the word *miracle*, they did so with no sense of hyperbole or levity. They meant that the writing of the Constitution was providential.

During the summer of 1787 Philadelphia saw various delegates come and go. Of the thirty-nine men who did most of the work and who eventually signed the Constitution, a majority were what we would call today very committed Christian laymen. All the Episcopalians in attendance were vestrymen of their parishes. Three delegates were lay preachers, and one of them had been a missionary to the Indians. One was the son of a minister. Two were presidents of their

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CDR Roger W. Pace, CHC, USN, is endorsed by the Churches of Christ. He is presently assigned to the Navy Chaplain Resource Board where he is responsible for chaplain corps history projects. Previous tours have been with Commander Amphibious Group Two, Commander Naval Base Guam, Naval Air Station, Point Magu, and Commander Destroyer Squadron Seventeen. His under graduate work was in history at Abilene Christian University. Chaplain Pace holds the M. Div. from United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio, and an M.A. in Marriage and Family Counseling from California Family Studies Center.

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states' Bible societies. One was a former Continental Army chaplain. Two were ardent Catholics and one of them was the brother of the first Catholic bishop in the United States. Several were generous financial supporters of their churches. One was a key figure in the writing of the Episcopal Prayer Book after the Revolutionary War. Most were at least partially educated by clergymen; Alexander Hamilton, totally. James Madison, the primary figure in creating the Constitution, stayed a year past his graduation at Princeton in order to study for the ministry. He decided against ordination, however, because he felt his voice was too weak for the pulpit. One delegate had been expelled from a pacifist church for having joined the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War, but he then became a loyal member of another church. One was a practicing Quaker. Franklin was the only one not a church member, but it was he who insisted that the convention employ a chaplain to pray at the start of each daily session.

Many delegates excelled in moral and humanitarian causes. Two were philanthropists. One signer devoted the remainder of his life to ending capital punishment. Many were intensely opposed to slavery. Franklin, a life-long foe of slavery, was selected president of an abolitionist society the same year he helped to write the Constitution. His last public act was to sign a letter to Congress urging the abolition of slavery.

The delegates were men who would have agreed with the statement of John Adams, who was then the Ambassador to Great Britain, when he said, "Free government rests upon public and private morality." They would have accepted without question the warning of the "New England Chronicle" (1776): "Liberty cannot be preserved if the manners (morals) of the people are corrupted." They valued the role of religion in promoting civil virtue and morality.

In the eighteenth century there were indeed few historical examples of republics which had not degenerated into tyranny. Representative government had almost died out in Europe. The British Parliament was then a "country club" run by mercantilists and landowners largely for their own benefit. Adams' statement, "Free government rests upon public and private morality," is a partial explanation why America formed the type of representative republic she did. He and the leaders of his era believed fervently in the power of virtue and morality. If the people could be privately and publicly moral, there was no reason for their not governing themselves through their own representatives. Virtue was not expected, however, to come about spontaneously; they thought it had to be created. The Constitution would guarantee for society the opportunity to practice and to develop public and private virtue.

Freedom of religion was considered important to the leaders of the American revolution because they saw it contributing directly to

greater virtue in the people and in the government. Liberty was necessary so that people could be moral. Freedom of religion was necessary so that churches would have greater opportunity to create morality and virtue in the people. The freedoms of press and assembly would also lead to greater public virtue. "Liberty is the parent . . . of every . . . virtue." (*Norwich Packet*, 1775)

This great faith in the combined effects of liberty and virtue in the people lies behind the accepted truths of the day such as "All power is . . . derived from the people," (*Virginia Declaration of Rights*, 1776) and the Constitution's preamble, "We the people of the United States in order to form a more perfect union . . ." Power could be entrusted to the people, and the people could form a more perfect union because of their virtue and their morality. Because the people were moral, they could be trusted with liberty, and in a circular fashion, liberty would give them more opportunity to practice morality and to achieve virtue.

James Madison, decades after the writing of the Constitution, rejoiced in the great increase of genuine religious education and obvious religious commitment among the American people. He attributed this increase to the fact that the churches had been freed from state interference by the Constitution. With this freedom, he felt the churches could pursue their true mission of teaching religious truth, virtue, and morality. Madison believed the healthiest religious climate, even for religion itself, was one in which all religions were free to propagate the faith. He would feel vindicated today to see the United States as the most religious country among the Western industrialized nations.

The relationship between church and state was determined in 1787-89. The Philadelphia Convention did not intend to make the relationship between church and state a national concern. The same "leave-it-to-the-states" attitude was true during the Continental Congress when it produced the Declaration of Independence. That document, however, makes frequent reference to matters of religion. The difference in tone between the two documents may be explained by the fact that the former was a declaration of war as well as of independence, and the latter was a statement written in time of peace.

Regardless of the different circumstance, however, the absence of talk about religion in the establishing of a new form of government was revolutionary. As Theodore White has put it, "Never in civilization, since the earliest ziggurats and temples went up in the mud-walled villages of pre-historic Mesopotamia, had there been any state that left each individual to find his way to God without the guidance of the state." Europe was astonished that wilderness America was the first nation in history to have the practical wisdom to get out of the religious guidance business. The Puritan, Quaker, and Anglican traditions, as they were practiced in colonial America,

explain how it happened that the Constitution writers separated church from state.

In 1787 the United States was 99% Protestant. New England had a strong Puritan tradition. The southern states, particularly Delaware, Virginia, and Maryland, favored Anglican worship. The Quakers were strongly represented in Pennsylvania. Roman Catholics were few in number. Most of their fifty parishes were located in Maryland, and even there they were a minority. It was even then frequently noted by foreigners visiting in America that Irish Catholics were considered American as soon as they stepped off the boat, whereas other nationalities took a generation to be so regarded. Irish immigration continued through the 1700s and increased enormously in the 1800s. The large Lutheran immigration from Northern Europe was still many years in the future. Some 150 churches of their faith group, however, were already located primarily in Pennsylvania. Nearly two hundred Reform churches were to be found mostly in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Baptists and Presbyterians were scattered throughout the states and were better represented along the frontier fringe than any other religious group. Their importance was to increase during the coming decades as revival movements swept the land and as the frontier advanced westward.

## **Puritan Practicality**

No Constitutional Convention delegate from the Puritan tradition would have wanted to involve the national government with religion. The New England Puritans who crafted the Constitution were utterly practical men. Puritan practicality meant they wanted a well-organized and highly effective government, but no Puritan would have believed any practical value could come from involving the national government with religion.

Puritan religion was a personal matter to be handled in the local congregation. Such people did not, of course, want a religious test imposed as a qualification for national office. They had no liking for a magistrate's power over their conscience. At the state level the Puritans made every effort to keep church and state separate. Since there was an established religion, it may not appear from our perspective that they kept church and state apart. But, it was viewed as separate by them. They kept church and state apart in a very practical way. Indeed they did not have a church; they had a congregation instead. The congregation was almost never called a church. A church, in the Puritan mind, was something controlled by the state. They refused to allow that to happen. A congregation was a group of people with a common desire to live a particular piety. Political leaders were required to be members of congregations. But the congregation did not control the state, and the state did not control the congregation.

The Puritan congregational system influenced the type of government these men were to choose for the country. The Puritan congregations governed themselves spiritually. Puritans could easily believe that the people were fit enough to govern the nation as well. A federal system of government paralleled their congregational government. Congregationalism very carefully allowed individual churches to be in a free fellowship with one another that did not bind them or the individual members to "particular dogma." As their churches lacked a central authority but were united, so their new national authority would maintain unity, while allowing the liberty they already enjoyed.

Another dimension of the Constitution may be credited to the Puritans. The Puritans strongly supported the constitutional system of checks and balances. Puritan faith agreed that men are not angels, and that other men must watch them to keep them from abusing their power. The checks and balances of the Constitution were to be a safeguard against the iniquity of humanity.

In popular thinking today Puritans are remembered as an intolerant community. Internally, for much of their history, that may have been accurate. But, they never imposed their beliefs on those outside. Their internal intolerance came from the need to deal with the frontier wilderness and the intense desire to create a religious Zion in New England. Internal religious debate under those circumstances was impractical. By the 1750s, however, with the nearby wilderness somewhat subdued and Zion established, they were open to differing views.

Puritans did not have a doctrine of toleration, but their doctrine of practicality resulted in about the same thing. They had never sought to impose their religious beliefs on those outside their borders. Dissidents within a colony were simply rowed across the river and told not to come back. The Puritans wanted their community to teach the whole world by example rather than by force.

The Puritan patriots at the Convention knew that the American colonies had barely won the Revolutionary War. Only because they were united with other colonies, with different religious customs, had they been successful. As practical patriots they were not interested in creating disunity over religious questions with these valuable allies. They had believed in confederations and alliances with their neighbors for a century. They were much in favor of plans of action, united colonial programs, and schemes of confederation far more than they were in religious disputes.

It was a Puritan who first warned the Convention that, whether they knew it or not, they were drafting the highest law of the land, and they had better be careful what rights they took away from the people and the states. For that reason the Constitution carefully

reserves to the States all powers that were not specifically given to the National Government. This Constitutional legal theory is a practical application of the Puritan doctrine that every law is always under a higher law and ultimately under the law of God.

Service to one's neighbor was also a strong Puritan belief. Whether one worked at trade, medicine, agriculture, or government, one must always define the value of one's work in terms of service to the community. Puritan government office holders saw government as an opportunity to do good for their neighbors. The Puritans at the Constitutional Convention could not agree at first to pay government office holders. According to Puritan theology, it was a perversion to enrich oneself in government service. Service to the community was to be free of charge. At the Constitutional Convention, the Puritans agreed to the paying of office holders only as a concession.

## **The Quaker Experience**

The Quakers influenced the Constitution indirectly. The Quakers were willing to sacrifice everything for their religious beliefs, and they had long been in conflict with the state over religious matters. Some refused to live in Rhode Island, for example, because no one would persecute them there. They went elsewhere joyfully in search of the whipping post and the gallows in order to testify to their faith. The authorities in Boston could not get them to leave even after repeated warnings and pleadings. So, they cut an ear off one of them. When the Quaker came back to preach again, he was offered the choice of leaving or hanging. He chose hanging. He and his companions brought their burial shrouds with them for the occasion.

The Quaker experience in governing Pennsylvania from 1680-1756 had been a terrifying lesson in what could go wrong if a particular religious view were to become too influential in the decisions of state. Living by Quaker principles was personally painful perhaps; but governing by them created tragedy. Because of pacifist convictions and because they believed the Indian religions resembled their own, the Pennsylvania Quaker Assembly repeatedly refused to take military measures to protect the frontier from attack during the French and Indian War. According to Quaker belief, the war with the Indians was caused by the wicked whites. When hundreds of whites, mostly non-Quakers were massacred, Benjamin Franklin retired all Quakers from Pennsylvania government posts.

For the Convention Delegates, the Quakers were a vivid, recent historical example of (1) what could happen if religion and government were to be in conflict; and (2) what could happen if religion held a grip on government leaders. From this portion of the Quaker experience good arguments could be made for keeping state and religion as separate as possible.

There was much in the Quaker experience, however, that the



nation borrowed and for which we can be thankful. They were a positive example of how tolerance could create a powerful and wealthy state. Toleration was based on the Quaker doctrine that all men are essentially good. Pennsylvania, a wealthy and populous Quaker commonwealth, had attracted large numbers of immigrants because of its toleration for religious minorities. By 1787 so many Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Catholics had migrated to Pennsylvania that they were a majority. For decades other states, such as Virginia, had difficulty attracting immigrants. The writers of the Constitution were conscious that the United States would require immigration to thrive, and this is the background for the numerous references to naturalization of immigrants in the Constitution. The Quaker model for welcoming immigrants could not be improved, and it was taken into the Constitution.

No other Christian sect was as insistent on the doctrine of equality as the Quakers. Equality of people required equality of dress and speech. People should look equal to each other, and they should sound equal to each other. They should not address one another with titles. The Constitution forbids titles of nobility granted whether by the National or State governments. Later the only title for the President would be simply "Mr. President." These Quaker ideas became with the Constitution essential symbols of American democracy.

The writers of the Constitution were extremely careful to make Quaker participation welcome in the National government. Since Quakers could not take oaths and since the writers saw no reason why a Quaker could not be elected President, Senator, or Representative, the Constitution in a compromise allows one to "affirm" when accepting office. Under this provision Herbert Hoover and Richard Nixon took the "affirmation" for President.

Quakers were also deeply opposed to slavery. The few who had owned slaves freed them long before the Constitutional Convention. Every state contained a significant percentage of the populace who wished to see slavery disappear. There is some evidence that if the Convention had placed a time limit in the Constitution on slavery's existence, it would not have been a factor in ratification. That is to say, years of political turmoil and a hideous Civil War might have been avoided had the Quaker doctrine been incorporated in the Constitution.

During the Revolution the Quakers were mistrusted because they refused to defy the British. But no delegate at the Convention wanted to put anything in the new government that would lead to quarrels with the Quakers or any other Christian sect. The possibility of Quaker opposition to a national government was something a reasonable man would have dreaded. On the other hand, Quaker support and loyalty was seen as a great blessing to the new nation.

Accordingly, being Quaker or a member of any religious communion would not be a violation of any law in the new country.

The standards for membership in the Quaker meetings were very high. The presence of other religious communions in Pennsylvania, whose standards were also high, but who seemed to provide a better mix for involvement in both this world and the next, led to numerous defections from the Quaker faith over the decades. When these ex-Quakers joined churches and consequently became more active in government life, they brought with them Quaker values. Thomas Mifflin of Pennsylvania, for example, was born a Quaker, left the Society, served as an Army general, helped to write the Constitution, and was buried a Lutheran.

Quaker attitudes and practices become part of our Constitution and our national heritage. One wishes that their opposition to slavery and their insistence on fairness to the Native American might have been more readily accepted by the American people.

## **Anglican Toleration**

Anglicans did not come to North America seeking religious freedom; they already had it as members of the state Church of England. In many colonies the Church of England was the religion of the entire community. The Church of England in Virginia was as much opposed to bishops as was Puritan Massachusetts. In 1771 the House of Burgesses refused to allow a bishop to be sent to Virginia. It was only after the Revolution that a bishop of the Church of England came to this country.

Before the Revolution in this country, Anglican church authority rested in the parish. The parish exercised this responsibility through the vestry. Vestrymen were a self-perpetuating board of laymen. Every Anglican at the Constitutional convention was or had been a vestryman.

As vestrymen, the signers of the Constitution would have collected parish taxes which were usually four times higher than any other tax paid. This money supplied the minister, provided for the poor, and cared for the orphans. It was the vestry, for example, that fed and housed the citizens of Norfolk when that city burned January 1, 1776. Vestrymen also took people to court for drunkenness, blasphemy, profanity, missing church, fornication, adultery, for failing to provide for illegitimate offspring, and for other moral offenses.

Ministers served on a year-to-year basis at the pleasure of the vestry. The clergy never seem to have seen that as a handicap; most stayed a lifetime in the same parish. The minister was an honored person who was expected to marry into the aristocracy regardless of his class origins. Anglican ministers were known for their dedication, hard work, and personal morality. There is no question that the

eighteenth century American Anglican priest was notably superior to his English counterpart. The credit for such clergy in part belongs to the vestry who worked dutifully to make it so.

The Anglican church in America before the Revolution was characterized by an independence from Church authorities in Britain and by a toleration for dissenters in America. When laws in England restricting religious dissenters were revoked, American Anglicans, who were not themselves dissenters, rejoiced with public thanksgiving and the firing of cannon. When Presbyterians moved into Virginia's Hanover Parish, the Anglican vestrymen built them a chapel and paid their minister's salary. Colonial law required all office holders to be members of the Church of England; but long before the Revolution, Quakers and Roman Catholics sat in Virginia's legislature. Being a "virtuous" citizen mattered far more than personal dogma.

During this period revivalist preachers experienced great success in Virginia without opposition. The Anglican clergy recorded approvingly that these enthusiastic preachers inspired criminals to seek salvation, moved idlers to provide for their families, and reformed sinners in general. The uncle of patriot Patrick Henry, the Reverend Patrick Henry, invited a revivalist preacher into his Anglican pulpit.

With this great history of religious tolerance among the Anglican colonies, it is surprising to read of persecution in Virginia in the 1770s. Unfortunately, some Baptist preachers found themselves in prison on the issue of licensing. Fifty Baptist preachers were jailed between 1768-1776. The state reserved the right to license ministers and to know where they preached. A few of the dissenting clergy felt their calling to preach might only be for a few weeks or months, after which the Almighty would return them to their farms. They resisted any government intrusion into what for them was strictly a private religious matter. Licensing was also the question for one preacher who served seven churches in seven counties. The judge saw this as absentee clericalism, and the pastor went to jail.

The jailing of preachers distressed Madison and many others. The people could not reconcile how they, citizens of a state that prided itself on a tolerance for religious diversity, could in any way be part of persecuting religion. It seemed to many that union of church and state was the basic reason for the state becoming involved in these persecutions.

Virginia leaders during the Revolution began to search for better ways to conduct their state-religious affairs. This was especially pressing since these persecuted people were often the most patriotic. One interim proposal, favored by George Washington, was to declare all Baptists, Presbyterians, Quakers, and others to be part of the Church of Virginia. Each congregation could then choose its own minister whom the state would pay.

By 1785, however, the argument prevailed that anything involving the state in religion would weaken the state and do harm to religion. People believed that the state was held up by a foundation of religion and virtue. If the state attacked religion or became involved in religion in any way, the state weakened the source of its own virtue and moral strength. To strengthen the state, it seemed necessary for the state to maintain neutrality. Freedom of religion would free both the government and the churches to do what each did best.

If the signers of the Constitution from the Anglican Church were tolerant of other faiths, it is a mistake to believe that they were lukewarm in their own. Madison, for example, the man who argued for years for religious freedom in Virginia, insisted that no test oath be put into the national Constitution; and the man who helped draft the religious clause of the First Amendment, practiced daily devotions. Freedom of religion in America did not originate in atheism and anti-religion, but among people of quiet, tolerant faith.

The Revolution was an "all-faiths" war. Almost all the Continental Army generals were Presbyterian. The British aristocracy called the Revolution the "Presbyterian War." Irish Catholics served in numbers at Valley Forge and elsewhere. A Jewish war veteran wrote the Constitutional Convention that he and his co-religionists had suffered much during the Revolution because of their loyalty to the patriotic cause. But, because most states required taking Christian religious oaths in order to sit in state office, he and his fellow believers could not fully enjoy the liberty for which they had fought. Would not the Convention correct this error he wrote? Would not the god of Abraham, he prayed, give the delegates wisdom and unanimity to grant his plea?

No one knows if the delegates answered the Jewish veteran. We do know, however, that they prohibited the sort of oath which excluded him from participating in national public life. Yet the Convention did nothing to change such exclusionary oaths at the state level which had led to his complaint in the first place. Madison seems to have remembered this letter when as a Congressman he was drafting the First Amendment to the Constitution. His proposed draft forbade states the power to require such religious oaths. The Senate unfortunately refused to pass his version, and state oaths continued for some years.

The delegates would have had time to reply to the letter during the Convention. The work day began at about 9:30 a.m. and ended around 3:00 p.m. They met for a shorter period on Saturday. Their remaining hours were spent resting, eating, in committee meetings (where compromises were worked out), socializing, and in church.

Religious life was healthy in Philadelphia that summer. The delegates would have been well aware that the Presbyterians were also

convening in the city. Most delegates attended an Independence Day Service at the Lutheran Church. To Episcopalian, George Washington, it was a "Calvinist" church! Also meeting locally was the Society of Cincinnati, an organization of war veterans. Washington, the president of the Society, did not attend any of its meetings, but he did attend Episcopal services at St. Mary's on Fourth Street. He probably took communion. During the Revolution, Washington did not take communion at all. It is believed that he would not commune with a church that was even theoretically headed by George III.

Washington's language and the speeches and conversations of the other delegates were sprinkled with informal references to the Deity, to heaven, and to Providence, a favorite word. Delegates addressed supplications to heaven and sought the protection of God in debate. Religious language was a serious matter to eighteenth century men, and its use would have had a far more telling effect upon them than it might upon us. It is indeed difficult in our day of language inflation to recapture the spirit of those days and those words. Few of the delegates were orators. The Virginians were especially poor speakers, because their legislature was a conversational gathering rather than a speech making assembly. The delegates at one point in the Convention discovered what the country continues to discover in every generation. They learned that it is easy to separate church and state, and it is easy to declare freedom of religion. But, what does that mean? How does one work out the practical daily life of religion and government? Madison wrote years later that it was probably impossible to draw a line between the rights of religion and the rights of state. People are religious, and religion has rights, too. People in government are religious, and they bring their faith with them into moral and ethical decisions. The problem that forced this issue on the delegates was the chaplaincy.

After the Convention had been in session for several weeks, Benjamin Franklin suggested they employ a chaplain to say prayers at the start of each session. Franklin's motives were probably immediate and practical. The Convention was about to admit failure and dissolve. Franklin may have hoped that a call to religion would hold the delegates together. He reminded them that twelve years before in that same room many of them, as members of the Continental Congress, had declared war against Great Britain. All their deliberations then had begun with daily prayer. He further reminded them that their Declaration of Independence made frequent reference to the Almighty. Since these previous efforts had been blessed with success, perhaps their present failure was caused by a need to ask for that divine blessing again.

None of the delegates wished to embarrass Franklin, but there were two problems. Alexander Hamilton pointed out that since the Convention had been meeting several weeks, to summon a chaplain

now would give the public evidence that they were failing. That was probably exactly what Franklin wanted the delegates to think about. Moreover there were no funds to pay a chaplain. Nothing was done about opening prayer. The Convention did at this point decide, however, that if they could not reach agreement on a matter, it should be turned over to committee for compromise, and discussion should move on to other matters. Franklin's suggestion, though not adopted, did get the Convention moving again.

The idea for a chaplaincy did not go away. As a member of the Congress in 1790, James Madison sat on the committee drafting the Freedom of Religion Amendment for the Bill of Rights. At the same time he selected the Congressional chaplain. Even though he passionately wanted church and state separate, he does not seem to have wanted Congress to function apart from the supplication for the daily blessing of God.

Madison's writings after 1816, when he had left the government, reveal an opposition to chaplains in Congress and in the military. He opposed them for three reasons. First, since Catholic and Quaker clergymen represented small and unpopular "sects" in his day, they would never be appointed chaplain in the United States. Second, the chaplain would force others to follow the religion of his denomination. Third, if the churches want chaplains, the churches should pay for them, not the government.

Madison feared the state would establish religion if there were a chaplaincy. His second objection showed that he connected a chaplaincy with the loss of freedom of religion. Madison also believed that armies and navies throughout the world had chaplains, not for the spiritual well-being of the soldiers and sailors, but rather as a means by which the government controlled religion. He did not want the United States to exercise any religious control of its citizens by means of chaplains.

Madison probably presumed that no Army regiments would ever go anywhere that local civilian churches would be unavailable to offer ministry to soldiers. He probably thought of the few Navy ships with small crews in his day as coastal defense ships that would not go far or long from port. The use of laymen to conduct worship at sea was a long accepted custom, and he saw no reason to change it. He wrote that sailors would derive far more spiritual benefit from a devout officer than they ever would from a chaplain.

Slavery was a religious issue for many signers of the Constitution. The Virginia delegates opposed slavery and the slave trade. Other slave states wanted both. Most delegates believed that the key issue was Congress' control of trade. In order to win the point, the slave trade was allowed to exist until 1808.

The slave trade continued illegally after 1808. Britain's Royal Navy and the U.S. Navy enforced an anti-slavery blockade in the

Atlantic in the nineteenth century. Slavers, however, using modern steam ships, outran slow U.S. Navy sailing vessels until a more effective blockade was established in 1861. This great curse could have perhaps been avoided at Philadelphia if statesmanship had prevailed.

Morality in government is another religious issue implicit in the Constitution. The writers believed that good government did not need the official support of religion. Oppressive rulers needed an official, state-dominated religion to keep their subjects under control. But, the United States were to be free lands with free people who would support their honest, upright government of their own free will.

It is well-known that religion thrived in the years after the adoption of the Constitution. It was proved once and for all to Americans that religion in this country did not need government support. Madison believed until his death in 1836 that government had prospered as well in the separation from church.

Madison's official behavior about church and state was confusing in the years after Philadelphia. While the president of the United States, he issued numerous fasting and prayer proclamations. He suffered through the War of 1812, and he was nearly captured by the British when they burned the White House. He may well have felt the need for prayer and religious strength in days like those. In times of scholarly reflection, however, Madison would write that he regretted issuing any proclamations for prayer. Like many men of brilliant and fertile minds, he could be wonderfully inconsistent. In no period of his life, however, did he neglect his personal practice of religion.

The churches not only grew during the early years of the Republic, but they often united, reorganized, restructured themselves, and pressed Congress for new laws based on moral and religious principles. If the signers of the Constitution were to return today, they would still expect religion to do today what they intended it to do when they paired it with freedom of press and freedom of assembly. Religion would set a moral tone, advocate virtue, and hold the nation to the measuring rod of selflessness, integrity, honesty, and service for the common good. Finally, they would probably say that if there were conflict between religion and government, it was because one had moved too close to the other.





# Abraham Baldwin: Army Chaplain And Signer Of The Constitution

William J. Hourihan

During the summer of 1787, at a critical juncture in the course of the proceedings of the Constitutional Convention which was meeting in Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin delivered a speech to the delegates suggesting that each daily session should begin with a prayer. For a variety of reasons—"an unwillingness to let the public think the convention was in trouble, lack of money to pay the minister, and in deference to Philadelphia's Quakers"—the initiative was not acted upon.<sup>1</sup> Another and perhaps philosophically more important reason why the delegates reacted with such little enthusiasm to Franklin's proposal can be found in the intellectual underpinnings which united the majority of the delegates. Although it is a point often overlooked, for the most part these men were eighteenth century rationalists. They believed in God, of course, but God as a "prime mover." They were Deists and had a suspicion of organized religion. They were particularly apprehensive about a connection between formal religious practice and the functions of government. By and large, the Constitution of the United States of America is a testament to their belief. When Franklin later wrote about the episode, he said that of the fifty-five delegates only "three or four persons, thought prayer was necessary."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Leonard W. Levy, *The Establishment Clause: Religion and the First Amendment* (New York, 1986), 64.

<sup>2</sup> As quoted in, *Ibid.*, 64.

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Dr. William J. Hourihan is the United States Army Chaplain Branch Historian, currently attached to the US Army Chaplain Center and School, Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. Dr. Hourihan is also on the faculty of Monmouth College, West Long Branch, New Jersey, where he teaches Military History.

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Although we are not certain, it is, at least, highly probable that one of these "three or four" individuals was Abraham Baldwin, a delegate to the Convention from the state of Georgia. Although Abraham Baldwin was a wealthy man and an important political figure in his state (he would later become a senator from Georgia, and help to found the University of Georgia), he also had a background unusual among his fellow delegates. During the Revolution, Abraham Baldwin served his country in a military capacity as did twenty-three of his fellow delegates; but unlike the others, Baldwin was a minister of the Christian religion, an elected professor of divinity at Yale College, and an American Army chaplain.

Abraham Baldwin was born in 1754 in the small Connecticut community of New Guilford, the second son of Michael Baldwin, the town blacksmith. On his father's side the family from which he sprang had been settled in Connecticut since 1639, and although his father practiced a modest trade, he was ambitious to further the education of his children. He moved his family to New Haven, a larger town, in order to facilitate this goal. After being educated at home and in the local schools of the Guilford area, in the autumn of 1768 Abraham Baldwin entered Yale College in New Haven. He was fourteen, which was not an uncommon age in this era to begin college. His years at Yale were characterized by stress and change, both inside and outside the institution. Baldwin was educated in the classics, with a strong emphasis on Latin, Greek, Hebrew, mathematics, and philosophy.<sup>3</sup> During this period and afterward, the small college of Yale produced many of the most notable and influential members of American society. One later observer, the well-known nineteenth century educator and graduate of Harvard, Dr. Charles Franklin Thwing, held that "of the men filling the highest political and judicial offices in the United States up to the end of the nineteenth century, Yale, of all the older colleges, had helped train the largest number."<sup>4</sup>

Baldwin graduated from Yale College with a bachelor of arts degree in the spring of 1772. Ezra Stiles, who was President of Yale after 1777, and Timothy Dwight, a tutor at Yale during Baldwin's time and who was later himself to become a president of the college, attested to Baldwin's high intellectual standing and scholarly gifts. "A good Hebrician," "a fine Classicist," and "an enlightened and learned man," were some of the praises lavished upon Baldwin by those who knew him. A scholarly career within the tight confines of an academic life seemed assured for Baldwin as he began a serious course of study in divinity at Yale after graduation. This study, along

<sup>3</sup> Henry C. White, *Abraham Baldwin: One of the Founders of the Republic, and Father of the University of Georgia, the First of American States Universities* (New York, 1926), 11, 17-24.

<sup>4</sup> As quoted in, *Ibid.*, 25.

with tutoring and teaching, filled the next three years of his life. This pursuit culminated in September 1775, when he was licensed to preach by the New Haven Association of Ministers and appointed a tutor at Yale.<sup>5</sup> He was then fully engaged upon a course which would, in a more peaceful and harmonious time, have led to a position as the professor of divinity at Yale and to a quiet life of study and teaching within the confines of that institute and New Haven. What happened instead to this twenty-one year old scholar and preacher was to direct him far away from the cloistered academic life to a destiny which he could have hardly imagined in 1775. By the events which occurred at Concord and Lexington in April 1775, Baldwin's life would be irrevocably given a new direction.

From the earliest days of the Revolution and before, ministers of religion were important participants in the events of the time. Four New England clerics saw service during the fighting on that April day at Concord and Lexington. The pastor of Concord, The Reverend William Emerson, walked along the front lines of the American militia awaiting the British approach, his musket in hand, steadying the men with his calm words; stopping to tell one young minuteman, "Don't be afraid, Harry; God is on our side."<sup>6</sup> When Washington took command of the American forces besieging Boston in the summer of 1775, he found fifteen chaplains ministering to the twenty-three regiments gathered there. On July 29, 1775, just before Washington arrived in Cambridge, the Continental Congress implicitly recognized the place of the chaplaincy in the Army by voting to pay chaplains twenty dollars per month, the same sum extended to those officers of the rank of captain.<sup>7</sup> General Washington, nearly a year later on July 9, 1776, put forward in his General Orders of that day his own personal position on the role of the chaplain and religion in the Army.

The Hon. Continental Congress having been pleased to allow a chaplain to each Regiment, with the pay of thirty-three dollars and one third per month—the Colonels or commanding officers of each regiment are directed to procure Chaplains accordingly; persons of good characters and exemplary lives—To see that all inferior officers and soldiers pay them a suitable respect and attend carefully upon religious exercises. The blessing and protection of Heaven are at all times necessary but especially so in times of public distress and danger—The General hopes and trusts, that every officer and man, will endeavor so to live, and act, as becomes a Christian

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 19, 25-26.

<sup>6</sup> Edward Waldo Emerson, *A Chaplain of the Revolution* (Boston, 1922), 15.

<sup>7</sup> Parker C. Thompson, *From Its European Antecedents To 1791: The United States Army Chaplaincy* (Washington, D.C., 1978), 106-107.

Soldier defending the dearest Rights and Liberties of his country.<sup>8</sup>

Between 1775 and 1783, over two hundred American clergy served as chaplains with the American forces. They were found in every campaign and on every battlefield in that long conflict: Bunker Hill, Quebec, White Plains, Trenton, Princeton, Brandywine, Saratoga, Monmouth, King's Mountain, and Yorktown. Their duties were wide ranging. Besides accompanying the troops in battle and on the march, the exigencies of war found them preaching in camp, visiting and caring for the sick and wounded, and ministering to the dying. In Connecticut many of the younger ministers and candidates for the ministry served with their state's forces and with other units both on an irregular and a permanent basis.

Baldwin at Yale was soon caught up in the maelstrom of revolution. Even before Baldwin's involvement, his friend and associate at Yale, Timothy Dwight, left his position as a tutor and served early on in the Revolution as a chaplain. When Dwight returned to Yale it was Baldwin who left the college to replace him in the field.<sup>9</sup> Dwight, besides going on to become president of Yale in 1795, would also become America's first epic poet, producing "The Conquest of Canaan," a poem in eleven books.<sup>10</sup> A hymn he authored, "I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord," has been called, "the only American hymn to survive all those written between 1620 and 1824."<sup>11</sup>

The Official Register of Officers of the Continental Line give Baldwin's term of service from February 1, 1778, to June 3, 1783. During the first few months of his chaplaincy, he served on an irregular basis, still retaining his tutorship at Yale. He resigned this position on June 17, 1779, in order to accept a permanent post in General Parson's Brigade. He held this post until 1781. At that time he was transferred to the Connecticut Brigade, serving with it until his mustering out in 1783.<sup>12</sup>

Baldwin spent these years with a group of chaplains who, like himself, would achieve further distinction after the war. Besides Timothy Dwight, there was John Mason (a future educator); Enos Hitchcock (a politician, and a founder of the Order of Cincinnati), and Joel Barlow. Barlow, who met Baldwin at Yale where the latter was his tutor, left the ministry as did Baldwin after the war. Barlow entered the diplomatic service of the United States and represented this nation at Algiers during the war with the Barbary pirates. He also married Baldwin's sister (a romance which Baldwin facilitated

<sup>8</sup> As quoted in, *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 205.

<sup>10</sup> Albert Edward Bailey, *The Gospel in Hymns* (New York, 1950), 480.

<sup>11</sup> Thompson, *From Its European Antecedents*, 205.

<sup>12</sup> White, *Abraham Baldwin*, 28.

despite the family's objections), and he authored one of the most popular poems of the period, "The Vision of Columbus."<sup>13</sup>

Of Baldwin's life as an army chaplain little is known directly. Letters to his brother-in-law, Joel Barlow, and letters and conversations with President Ezra Stiles of Yale, referred to in the latter's diary, give us some idea of Baldwin's experiences. After 1778 the focus of military activity in the Revolution shifted to the south. In the north, where Baldwin would see his service as chaplain, the British conducted a holding operation based around the city of New York. "There were no military operations of consequence in Connecticut; only occasional landing from the British fleet to destroy 'salt-pans' and suspected stores, with incidental burnings of a few villages, but no permanent occupation by the enemy."<sup>14</sup> The brigades in which Baldwin served were not employed far beyond the boundaries of Connecticut. Their operations were confined to the banks of the Hudson River, mainly in the Highlands, guarding against any activity by the British garrison in New York. Baldwin's duties appear to have been light, chiefly preaching to the troops "once, and sometimes twice, each day; visiting and encouraging the men, officiating at funerals, etc."<sup>15</sup> He had ample leisure time, and he used it constructively in the study of languages, particularly French, and the law. He also had time to make frequent trips back to New Haven to visit Yale and his family. "He 'passed through Norwalk in ruins,' and wrote from White Plains giving an account of the operations of the army in that vicinity."<sup>16</sup> If Baldwin's service in actual combat was minimal, his position in the Army was not. Unlike most chaplains, his military rank was a high one. As a colonel, "he lived generally with the Staff and at Headquarters of the command to which he was attached."<sup>17</sup> He knew and was known to many of the high leadership in the Army, dining and associating with General Washington, General Benjamin Lincoln, and General Nathanael Greene. Indeed it was probably his close affiliation with Greene which had a great deal to do with his settling in Georgia after the war.<sup>18</sup>

A key decision for the future direction of Baldwin's life was made in 1781, when he was elected by Yale College in January of that year to be its new professor of divinity, succeeding Dr. Naphthali Daggett who had died in late 1780. Baldwin was elected by a unanimous vote of the Yale Corporation, which praised him as superior to all other candidates "collectively as to the Languages, Belles Lettres and History and the Sciences in general; modest,

<sup>13</sup> Thompson, *From Its European Antecedents*, 205.

<sup>14</sup> White, *Abraham Baldwin*, 29.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 29, 33-34.

prudent, judicious; well accepted at college; his Elocution good; and though young in study of Divinity; yet judged sound and orthodox, particularly by Mr. Huntington who had lately heard him preach two sermons upon the topical subjects of Human Depravity and Atonement; and, as he was studious from his youth up and hopefully would continue to be so, it was expected that he would become the learned Theologian.”<sup>19</sup> For Baldwin it was a decisive moment. The seriousness with which he wrestled with the decision to accept or reject this flattering and prestigious appointment, can be seen in the nearly eight months he took before informing the college in September 1781 of his refusal. Baldwin, while still serving as a chaplain in the Army, then turned purposefully to the study of the law, and in April 1783 he was admitted to the bar in Fairfield County, Connecticut. Two months later while the Treaty of Paris was being negotiated, Baldwin was discharged from the Army, and by the close of the year he had left Connecticut to start a new life in Georgia.<sup>20</sup>

On January 20, 1784, the Georgia House of Assembly granted his petition “to practice as an Attorney at Law in the Courts of this State.”<sup>21</sup> Within a short time the same combination of qualities which had served to bring advancement to Baldwin both at Yale and in the Army, then brought him to the fore in the political and social life of his adopted state. He settled in Wilkes County, Georgia, and in January 1785 he became a member of the Georgia House. That same year he was elected to represent Georgia in the Congress of the Confederation which met in New York City. His background and intelligence enabled him to become one of the leaders in the Georgia legislature and a prominent figure in Georgia politics. Many of the legislative initiatives dealt with by the Georgia Legislature between 1785 and 1789, particularly in educational policy, bear the stamp of his influence. In early 1787 Baldwin was chosen by the Georgia House as one of the six delegates to represent the state in Philadelphia at the Constitutional Convention. The formal opening of the Convention took place on May 25, 1787, but because of the press of legislative business and travel delays, Baldwin did not take his seat with the Georgia delegation until June 11.

Throughout the summer of 1787 Baldwin was in almost constant attendance at the Convention, and when it ended, he was one of the two remaining Georgia delegates to sign the Constitution on behalf of his state on September 17, 1787.<sup>22</sup> In the drafting and shaping of the Constitution, Baldwin was a compromiser and a conciliator. The historian Clinton Rossiter describes him as by “far

<sup>19</sup> As quoted in, *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 31, 35.

<sup>21</sup> As quoted in, *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 36-37, 119-120, 92-118.

and away the best of the Georgians, an able committeeman, and a force for intelligent compromise.”<sup>23</sup> This view is underscored by the contemporary observations of William Pierce, a fellow member of the Georgia delegation, who wrote of Baldwin: “a Gentleman of superior abilities, and joins in a public debate with great art and eloquence. He is well acquainted with Books and Characters, and has an accommodating turn of mind, which enables him to gain the confidence of Men, and to understand them.”<sup>24</sup> Although he assiduously attended the sessions of the Convention, Baldwin did not play a conspicuous role in the great debates surrounding most of the major questions that summer. He did, however, have a significant part in helping to draw up the Great Compromise, which gave all the states, large and small, an equal representation in the Senate while allowing population strength to determine state representation in the House.<sup>25</sup>

Baldwin was elected to the first House of Representatives formed under the Constitution in 1789, and he served in that body representing Georgia until 1799. A moderate Jeffersonian in his politics, he identified strongly with states rights and opposed the assumption of state debts by the national government. He also strongly protested the enactment of the Alien and Sedition Laws. In 1799 he entered the Senate of the United States and served as president *pro tempore* during the first session of the Seventh Congress. In his career in the Senate he was a loyal and consistent supporter of the Jefferson administration. It was during these years in the House and Senate that he helped lay the foundations of the University of Georgia, his greatest memorial. Baldwin served in the Senate until his death on March 4, 1807.<sup>26</sup> Moderate and prudent to the end, Abraham Baldwin said to his brother-in-law, Joel Barlow, in the last recorded statement before his death. “Take care,” he said, “hold the wagon back; there is more danger of its running too fast than of its going too slow.”<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Clinton Rossiter, *1787: The Grand Convention* (N.Y., 1966), 251.

<sup>24</sup> William Pierce, “Character Sketches of Delegates,” in Max Farrand, ed., *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787*, III (New Haven, 1911), 97.

<sup>25</sup> White, *Abraham Baldwin*, 109-112.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 122-196.

<sup>27</sup> As quoted in, C.B. Todd, *Life and Letters of Joel Barlow* (New York, 1886), 212.

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# The Chaplain As Professor At West Point 1813-1896

John Brinsfield

With the exception of about thirty years, chaplains have been continuously stationed at West Point since 1778. As early as the American Revolution, they demonstrated their value to the Army as preachers and moralists whose influence added cohesion to the war effort.<sup>1</sup> After the Revolutionary War chaplains were chosen to return again in their dual professional role to teach ethics and other subjects to the Corps of Cadets. Some of the issues and challenges they faced and some of the contributions they made as professors of geography, history, and ethics from 1813 to 1896 provide a significant background for the study of modern historical and ethical instruction at the United States Military Academy and an interesting perspective on the changing functions of military chaplains, not only in the nineteenth century but also today.

<sup>1</sup> There are over fifty references in George Washington's letters to the appointment, pay, and value of military chaplains "to animate the Soldiery and Impress them with a Knowledge of the important rights as we are contending for . . . holding forth the Necessity of courage and bravery and at the same time of Obedience and Subordination to those in Command." See Parker C. Thompson, *From Its European Antecedents to 1791: The United States Army Chaplaincy* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Department of the Army, 1978), p. 119 and John C. Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1931), I, 498 and Index. Other bibliographical entries for tracing the chaplain's role as moralist in the American Revolution to the chaplain's role as ethicist at West Point include: Noah Brooks, *Henry Knox* (New York: DaCapo Press, 1974), p. 167, and *The Centennial of the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. 1802-1902* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), I, 366ff. Contrasting views of the role of chaplains in the Revolutionary period are expressed by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison in J. P. Boyd (ed.) *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961), VI, 328 and James Madison, *Letters and Other Writings* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1865), III, 274.

## The Early Curriculum

In 1802 President Thomas Jefferson appointed Jonathan Williams, the grand-nephew of Benjamin Franklin, to take charge of the school of engineering at West Point. Two cadets were graduated that year, one of whom, Joseph G. Swift, became Chief Engineer of the United States and in 1812 returned to West Point to become the Superintendent of the United States Military Academy following the resignation of Williams.

Williams had stressed the need for a chaplain at West Point before he left. As one first-class cadet reflected on the conditions in 1812, "All order and regulation, either moral or religious, gave way to idleness, dissipation and irreligion."<sup>2</sup> Superintendent Swift agreed with Williams and petitioned President Madison's Secretary of War, John Armstrong, to authorize a brigade chaplain for West Point. Swift nominated his personal friend, the Rev. Adam Empie, rector of St. James' Episcopal Church in Wilmington, North Carolina, for the job because the service of the Episcopal Church "was most appropriate to the discipline of a military academy."<sup>3</sup>

Swift, however, wanted his chaplain to do more than to preach on Sundays. Swift wanted to enlarge the curriculum at West Point making it more competitive with the New England colleges. Accordingly, Chaplain Empie was appointed Acting Professor of Geography, History, and Ethics on 9 August 1813 to help carry out this goal.<sup>4</sup> Although Empie, like the majority of United States Army Military Academy chaplains in the nineteenth century wore civilian clothing, his appointment was a military one. As chaplain of a brigade, he was paid at the rank of a captain of cavalry which was the pay scale during the early part of the Revolutionary War.<sup>5</sup>

The first textbook, if it may be called a textbook, issued to all of the cadets by Chaplain Empie from 1814 to 1816 was the Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer*.<sup>6</sup> Chaplain Empie lectured only occasionally but conducted daily liturgical prayers, two Sunday worship services, and five cadet funerals from 1813 to 1818.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> As cited in Herman A. Norton, *Struggling for Recognition: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1791-1865* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Department of the Army, 1977), p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> John C. Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, VII, 440 and Parker C. Thompson, *The United States Army Chaplaincy*, I, 180. See also Edgar Denton III, "The Formative Years of the United States Military Academy, 1775-1833," Syracuse University Ph.D. dissertation, 1964.

<sup>6</sup> Listed as a textbook in *The Centennial of the United States Military Academy*, I, 439ff.

<sup>7</sup> U.S.M.A. Cemetery records show cadet deaths from disease, drowning, and steamboat accidents beginning with Cadet Thomas Denny of Massachusetts who died in September of 1813.

Superintendent Swift meanwhile took steps to broaden the library holdings and the textbook selections. The books that Swift had studied as a cadet, Hutton's *Mathematics*, Enfield's *Natural Philosophy*, Vauban's *Fortifications*, and Scheel's *Artillery*, were adequate when coupled with a course in surveying for the job of a civil engineer of the time, but Swift wanted a curriculum which would give the cadets a more comprehensive educational background. He requested a catalog of books from Dr. J. T. Kirkland, President of Harvard, for this purpose. Among the book titles that Kirkland furnished was William Paley's *Moral and Political Philosophy*, published in 1815, which was approved by the Episcopal Church and which became the standard textbook for the West Point course in moral philosophy until it was replaced by Wayland's *Elements of Moral Science* in 1844.<sup>8</sup> Paley's *Moral and Political Philosophy* holds an important place in the intellectual history of West Point because it was taught by six different chaplains for over twenty years to the Corps of Cadets in whose ranks stood Jefferson Davis, Albert Sidney Johnston, Robert E. Lee, Ulysses Grant, and William T. Sherman.

The formation of a regular course in ethics began in 1816 when the Regulations of the United States Military Academy for that year specified that "a course of ethics shall include natural and political law." Paley's *Moral and Political Philosophy* included chapters on the "Origin of Civil Government" drawn from John Locke, the "Law of Honor", several applications of the concept of duty, and topical comments of several pages each on war, slavery, duelling, prayer, crime and punishment, incest, divorce, and drunkenness. But Paley's work called for a supplement to deal with questions of law raised in his survey. Another book recommended by Dr. Kirkland, Burlemaqui's *Natural and Political Law*, published in 1807, was reviewed as a possible supplementary textbook. From the similarity in wording between the title of Burlemaqui's volume and the 1816 United States Military Academy Regulations, it would appear that Burlemaqui was used, perhaps with Puffendorf's *Law of Nature and Nations*, published in 1729, as a reference if not a text for Chaplain Empie's course.<sup>9</sup>

Chaplain Empie worked hard to support Captain Alden Partridge, the officer with the delegated authority to reshape West Point by Superintendent Swift. Empie served as Treasurer of the Academy and as the Academy Chaplain preached sermons noted for their "purity of language, soundness of doctrine, and fervor" of delivery.<sup>10</sup> After two years Partridge and his staff reportedly had brought "discipline to every aspect of the institution."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *The Centennial of the U.S.M.A.*, I, 439ff.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, Burlemaqui's book is listed as a text of unknown date.

<sup>10</sup> Herman A. Norton, *The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1791-1865*, p. 25.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

In 1817 when Partridge was replaced by Superintendent Sylvanus Thayer, Empie resigned in the midst of an acrimonious debate which even upset the Corps of Cadets. Before his death in 1869 Empie became President of William and Mary College in Williamsburg, Virginia.<sup>12</sup> During the fall of 1817 and the spring of 1818, the Superintendent intermittently served also as the Acting Chaplain at West Point. This was somewhat awkward because Thayer was not a communicant of the Episcopal Church at that time.<sup>13</sup>

On April 14, 1818, the Department of Geography, History, and Ethics was officially organized by an Act of Congress. In the previous year Chaplain Cave Jones, one of four chaplains in the Regular Army at the time, had been temporarily transferred to West Point, but he was honorably discharged under the 1818 Act. It was not until September of 1818 that the Rev. Thomas Picton, a native of Wales and the pastor of a Presbyterian Church in Westfield, New Jersey, was appointed by President James Monroe to become the second chaplain to teach ethics at West Point.<sup>14</sup>

Unfortunately for Picton, his initial sermon coincided with compulsory chapel attendance, a practice Superintendent Thayer inaugurated on September 21, 1818.<sup>15</sup> When the cadets were marched to chapel, they thought it was at the direction of the new chaplain and many deeply resented this innovation. Picton was forced to resign because of the discontent of cadets and the Board of Visitors' displeasure with his preaching and lack of strong leadership. Before he left, he replaced Burlemaqui's *Natural and Political Law* in 1818 with Emmerich de Vattel's *The Law of Nations or the Principles of Natural Law* which was used as a textbook for ten years.<sup>16</sup> Even after Vattel was replaced by the shorter Kent's *Commentaries on American Law* between 1818 and 1832, Vattel remained the "most widely accepted standard of authority" on the subject of international law at West Point until 1904.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* The Rev. Thomas Picton is buried in the West Point Cemetery.

<sup>13</sup> *The Centennial of the U.S.M.A.* I, 376 and William M. Polk, *Leonidas Polk* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1893), p. 72.

<sup>14</sup> Herman A. Norton, *The U.S. Army Chaplaincy, 1791-1865*, p. 27. Dr. Norton notes that Picton was listed in the official Army Register as an officer but without rank. For twenty years Picton was the only Army chaplain officially on duty aside from chaplains attached to various state militia units.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>16</sup> Douglas S. Freeman, *R. E. Lee: A Biography* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1934) I, 78-79, and *The Centennial of the U.S.M.A.*, I, 366ff.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* Jefferson Davis said his class used Kent for international law in 1828. The U.S.M.A. Regulations mention Paley and Kent in 1832 but not Vattel. See Col. Edgar S. Dudley's article, "Was 'Secession' Taught at West Point?" *Century Magazine*, August 1909, pp. 629-636 and R. T. Bennett, "Address of May 22, 1894," in *Southern Historical Society Papers*, (Richmond, Va: Southern Historical Society, 1894) XXII, 83-84. Vattel was quoted directly, however, by Jefferson Davis in volume one of his *Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government* (1881) and by Gen. John B. Hood (Class of 1853) in his book *Advance and Retreat* (1880).

## The Ministry Of Preaching And Teaching

The ministry of the chaplains at West Point in this period gradually evolved to a combination of teaching law and preaching moral philosophy. The chaplains taught constitutional and international law in mandatory classes and preached on the Ten Commandments in mandatory chapel.<sup>18</sup> Their object, of course, was to teach respect for the law as a means to good discipline. Most of the complaints by chaplains of this period such as Charles McIlvaine (1825-1828), Thomas Warner (1828-1838), and Jasper Adams (1839-1840) were not directed at their role as chaplains and professors of ethics but had to do with a feeling of marginality on the part of chaplains when their disciplines were compared with other training for cadets which was given higher priority.<sup>19</sup> Charles P. McIlvaine, the twenty-six year old Chaplain of the United States Senate who succeeded Thomas Picton at West Point in 1825, wrote about his first year: "Only on Saturday afternoon was any cadet allowed to visit an officer, or anybody else out of the barracks, without special permission from the Superintendent: and such was the feeling and prevalent sentiment about coming to see me, lest it should indicate something towards religion, that for a whole year I cannot remember that a single cadet ever visited me other than in the chapel or in the classroom."<sup>20</sup> The Rev. Thomas Warner was so incensed over his not having been informed of the death of a cadet in the hospital that he engaged in a shouting match with Superintendent Rene E. DeRussy and General Winfield Scott, an argument which Chaplain Warner ultimately lost. Professor Jasper Adams wrote reams of correspondence to Superintendent Richard Delafield protesting, among other things, the practice of having parades on Sundays in obvious violation of the Sabbath. Because of the set training and academic schedule, Chaplain Adams remarked, "The most that a chaplain can do, under the circumstances, is to keep things from becoming worse."<sup>21</sup>

McIlvaine, Warner, and Adams did not mean to imply by their protests that chaplains were not busy, but rather that they were too busy doing routine academic work of a secular nature. Most of the chaplains who resigned from West Point during the first half of the nineteenth century did so because they felt the inaccessibility of cadets and the mountain of academic and committee work precluded a more evangelical and effective ministry.

<sup>18</sup> Chaplain Jasper Adams (1839-1840) said that the cadets heard the Ten commandments read every Sunday. See correspondence between Chaplain Jasper Adams and Major Richard Delafield, February-March 1840, The Jasper Adams Papers, U.S.M.A. Archives, Box F.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* See also Herman A. Norton, *The U.S. Army Chaplaincy, 1791-1865*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>20</sup> Herman A. Norton, *The U.S. Army Chaplaincy, 1791-1865*, p. 30.

<sup>21</sup> Herman A. Norton, *The U.S. Army Chaplaincy, 1791-1865*, p. 31.

Nevertheless, both in preaching and in teaching activities some of the chaplains made remarkable impressions. In 1826 Charles McIlvaine put copies of a pamphlet by Dr. Olynthus Gregory entitled "Letters on the Evidences of Christianity" on deposit with the Quartermaster for the cadets. When Cadet Leonidas Polk, later Episcopal Bishop of Louisiana, read Gregory's argument for rational, scientific approach to the miracles of Jesus, he became McIlvaine's first convert. In a school which McIlvaine said had not "one professor of religion among the officers, military or civil," a revival broke out in the Corps of Cadets.<sup>22</sup> Eventually Cadets Robert E. Lee, Albert Sidney Johnston, Joseph E. Johnston, Jefferson Davis, Robert Anderson, and Martin Parks, Chaplain at West Point from 1841 to 1846, made their public professions of faith.<sup>23</sup> Jefferson Davis described McIlvaine's preaching as "eloquent, pious, and irresistible," and noted that in chapel McIlvaine once coordinated the major points in his sermon with a thunderstorm.<sup>24</sup>

Other compliments for the chaplains in the mid-nineteenth century concerned their expertise in teaching as well as in preaching. General Erasmus D. Keyes wrote in 1884 that as a cadet he "learned more from professor Warner in the section room than from any other teacher."<sup>25</sup> Robert E. Lee told Bishop Joseph Wilmer of Albemarle County, Virginia, that had he not read Rawle's *A View of the Constitution* in Warner's course, a book which upheld States rights doctrine, he would never have left the Union.<sup>26</sup> Cadet William T. Sherman of Ohio said the year in which he studied moral philosophy under Chaplain Jasper Adams was "by far the most important of the four," and Cadet Thomas J. Jackson wrote to his sister Laura in 1845 that the class in ethics under Chaplain Martin Parks was "preferable to any other in the course."<sup>27</sup> Walter L. Fleming, Professor of History at Louisiana State University at the turn of the century and an expert on early education at West Point, went so far as to state that in the light of the subsequent history of the Civil War the Chaplain's Course was one of the most important at the Academy.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>22</sup> William M. Polk, *Leonidas Polk*, p. 72.

<sup>23</sup> Herman A. Norton, *The U.S. Army Chaplaincy, 1791-1865* p. 31.

<sup>24</sup> Haskell M. Monroe, Jr. and James T. McIntosh, editors, *The Papers of Jefferson Davis* (Baton Rouge, La.: L.S.U. Press, 1971), I, lxxx.

<sup>25</sup> E. D. Keyes, *Fifty Years Observation of Men and Events* (New York: Scriber's Sons, 1884), p. 77.

<sup>26</sup> As cited in Wilbur Thomas, *Gen. George H. Thomas* (New York: Exposition Press, 1964), p. 63. See also Douglas S. Freeman, *R. E. Lee: A Biography* (New York: Scriber's Sons, 1934), I, 78-79.

<sup>27</sup> William T. Sherman to John Sherman, 31 August 1839 in *The Sherman Papers*, MF Reel 1, USMA Archives, and Thomas Jackson Arnold, *Early Life and Letters of Stonewall Jackson* (Richmond, Va.: Dietz Press, 1957), p. 73. See also Frank Vandiver, *Mighty Stonewall* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1957), p. 15.

<sup>28</sup> Walter L. Fleming, "Jefferson Davis at West Point," *Metropolitan Magazine*,

Many cadets were interested in “the Chaplain’s Course,” as it was entitled by the Academy Regulations of 1839, because it was a combination of the humanities and law offered nowhere else in the course of study. The emphasis by 1839 was on law and not so much on history or philosophy. Ellis Lewis, chairman of “a Committee on Moral, Religious, and Political Instruction at West Point” wrote to Thomas Bennett, President of the Academy’s Board of Visitors, in June of 1837 that the professor of ethics should teach National Law, Constitutional Law, and “Military Law connected with the science of war.”<sup>29</sup>

Chaplain Jasper Adams protested in 1840 that these duties of the professor of ethics “frustrated the Object of Congress in Providing for a Chaplain.”<sup>30</sup> Adams noted that military chaplains “aid the discipline of the Army and the conduct of individuals” and provide for the souls of men “during a war of violence and fury.”<sup>31</sup> Adams noted in his opinion that “there is an indissoluble connexion between religion and morals.”<sup>32</sup> But Adams asked to replace Paley’s text because it “teaches the young men that they have no conscience, diminishes their respect for truth, and perplexes, if it does not confound the distinction between right and wrong.”<sup>33</sup>

An exact knowledge of these textbooks is held to be of the greatest importance, long and patient examinations are held upon them, and the relative standing of the cadets in the Academy is made to depend on their acquaintance with them. Not only so, but their future rank in the army, and consequently their prospects in life, are made to depend on the degree of their acquaintance with them. The plan of instruction by lectures is not approved in the Academy . . .<sup>34</sup>

Chaplain Adams lost his appeal, however, and was replaced in 1841 by the Rev. Martin Parks of the Class of 1826 who had been converted in the McIlvaine years. The cadets responded enthusiastically to the increased emphasis on law, and the reputation of West Point changed in the years 1836-1846 from a “great place to make preachers” to a place where law provided the rationale for “the science of war.”<sup>35</sup>

1908, 282.

<sup>29</sup> *Reports of the Board of Visitors, 1826-1837*, USMA Archives.

<sup>30</sup> Professor Adams to Superintendent Delafield 3 February 1840 in the Jasper Adams Papers, USMA Archives, Drawer F.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* Adams was referring to Paley’s *Moral and Political Philosophy* which disputes the doctrine of universal conscience.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> West Point actually was called “a great place to make preachers” when Cadet

One might wonder why chaplains continued to serve at West Point with so much of their time taken up by what one Revolutionary War general called "concise discourses" on the "advantages of free government," and "illustrated by the most conspicuous examples in history."<sup>36</sup> There is evidence that while the cadets meticulously memorized their textbooks, many of the chaplains simply ignored directives and taught what they wished in the classroom. Charles McIlvaine spent most of his time lecturing on "The Evidences of Christianity;" Jasper Adams changed his textbook selections three times in two years in an effort to match the course to the topics he wanted to teach; and Chaplain W. T. Sprole (1847-1856) frequently turned his classes over to his assistant professor, Dabney H. Maury, who had just graduated the year before in the Class of 1846.

The cadets, however, responded to the concepts they encountered in the Chaplain's Course in many ways. After 1839 Cadets William T. Sherman, Thomas J. Jackson, and J. E. B. Stuart all seriously considered law as their profession after a stint in the Army. Sherman doubted he had the oratorical skill to be a good lawyer, but in 1894 he did study the law books he could find while he was stationed in South Carolina. In 1858-59 Sherman actually practiced law in Leavenworth, Kansas.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the cadets from 1840 to 1860 debated questions of law and national policy in their Dialectic Society and used the textbooks from the Chaplain's Course as references.<sup>38</sup>

## The Textbooks

The textbooks on geography, history, and ethics which the chaplains used at West Point from 1818 to 1896 are worth a dissertation in themselves. They formed what General William T. Sherman called in 1876, "the same fountain of knowledge" from which "the officers of all branches of the service drink."<sup>39</sup> Some of the textbooks were

William T. Sherman arrived in 1836. See Lloyd Lewis, *Sherman: Fighting Prophet* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1932), p. 54.

<sup>36</sup> Gen. Henry Knox who commanded the troops at West Point from 1782-1784 in Parker C. Thompson, *The U.S. Army Chaplaincy*, p. 221.

<sup>37</sup> *The Papers of William T. Sherman*, MSS 16, 927, MF Reel 1 (1810-1896) Chronology. USMA Archives.

<sup>38</sup> The Dialectic Society was founded in 1825 as a forum for debates in the Corps of Cadets. By 1836 every class but the plebes had a debating team. In 1841 the cadets decided by one vote that a state could legally secede from the Union. One of the books referenced at the time was Rawle's *View of the Constitution* which had been the textbook in the Chaplain's Course in 1826. One wonders if the debate had occurred in 1843 when Cadet Ulysses Grant was President of the Dialectic Society if the results would have been the same. See *Centennial of the U.S. Military Academy*, II, 95 and 100 and Hamlin Garland, *Ulysses S. Grant, His Life and Character* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1898), p. 46.

<sup>39</sup> William T. Sherman, *Addresses to the Graduating Class of the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, N.Y., June 14, 1876* (New York: Van Nostrand, 1876), p. 30.



used as references in the cadet debates as noted above, while others were cited forty or even fifty years afterward by Jefferson Davis (Class of 1828), William T. Sherman (Class of 1840), and John B. Hood (Class of 1853), in their works published after the Civil War.<sup>40</sup> The most recent reference to one of these old texts occurred as recently as June, 1981, in an article by Professor Telford Taylor published in *Parameters: Journal of the U.S. Army War College*.<sup>41</sup> A few remarks on the title and content of some of these textbooks may be helpful for understanding the long-term impact of the readings from the Chaplain's Course.

During the middle of the nineteenth century the average day's academic routine was an arduous one for the West Point cadet. In 1828, for example, nine hours a day were spent on recitations from textbooks. The First Class cadets that year spent five hours a day studying engineering, two hours in chemistry, and two hours in constitutional law, rhetoric, and ethics.<sup>42</sup> In 1840 the final examination period lasted for seventeen days, from eight o'clock in the morning to dusk. Each cadet in turn sat before the entire faculty and occasionally before the Board of Visitors for oral examinations on the textbooks. It is no wonder that Cadet Thomas J. Jackson's roommate in the Old South Barracks wrote of the future Confederate general in 1846, "To make the author's knowledge his own was ever the point at which he aimed . . . until he grasped with unerring quickness the inceptive points of all ethical and mathematical problems."<sup>43</sup>

Jedidiah Morse's *American Universal Geography*, J. W. French's *Grammar*, and Alex F. Tytler's *Elements of General History*, which were used between 1820 and 1871, as the geography, rhetoric, and history texts can only be mentioned. The law and moral philosophy texts, on the other hand, were much more important, especially to the Civil War generals.

If one combines the texts by philosophical viewpoint from 1820 through 1896, they fall into three major categories: 1) the Enlightenment texts, Burlamaqui's *Natural and Political Law* (1807), Vattel's *Law of Nations* (1758), Rawle's *A View of the Constitution*

<sup>40</sup> See Jefferson Davis, *the Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government* v. I and II (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1881) for citations from Vattel, Kent, and Wheaton and John B. Hood, *Advance and Retreat* (New Orleans, La.: G. T. Beauregard for the Hood Orphan Memorial Fund, 1880), p. 229ff for citations from Vattel and Halleck.

<sup>41</sup> The exact title is "Military Intervention in Civil Wars: Do Law and Morality Conflict?" Taylor quotes Dr. Francis Lieber whose draft of General Order 100 was promulgated by the U.S. Army in 1863 to the effect that war is "the means to obtain great ends of state."

<sup>42</sup> Walter L. Fleming, "Jefferson Davis at West Point," *Metropolitan Magazine*, 1908, 227-290.

<sup>43</sup> As cited in G. F. R. Henderson, *Stonewall Jackson and the American Civil War* (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Pub. Co., 1962), p. 44.

(1825), and Paley's *Moral and Political Philosophy* (1815) which were used in general from 1820 to 1830; 2) the Utilitarian texts, Lent's *Commentaries on American Law* (1826), Wheaton's *Elements of International Law* (1836), Story's *Commentaries on the Constitution* (1833), and, again, Paley's *Moral and Political Philosophy* (1815) which were used from 1830 to about 1866, and 3) the Survey texts, Halleck's *International Law* (1861) and Woolsey's *Introduction to the Study of International Law* (1860) which were used until 1896. In that year a new department of law was formed which took over instruction in law and history. The chaplain retired from the classroom to assume full duties at the Cadet Chapel.

## The Content

The cadets in the late 1820's who studied the Enlightenment texts were taught from Vattel that a civilized society is composed of a judiciary, an army, and a legislative body, with elements of piety and religion scattered throughout.<sup>44</sup> The people, however, organize their society; and therefore the sovereignty of a people is "absolute and inalienable."<sup>45</sup> In Judge Rawle's view "the people have a right to determine how they will be governed," and therefore a "state determines whether it will continue to be a member of the Union."<sup>46</sup>

Wars fought between the members of a state or between sovereign nations should conform to the principles of natural law, *i.e.*, cruelty and total destruction were to be avoided unless they were necessary to punish "atrocious offenses against the Law of Nations."<sup>47</sup> Vattel noted that "it would be dreadful to perpetuate the war, or to pursue it to the utter ruin of one of the parties," for the "right to kill our enemies points out the limits of that right."<sup>48</sup> Retaliation, in particular, is "a dreadful and extreme measure" which should not "fall upon innocent victims."<sup>49</sup> The cadets who studied these texts under the evangelical Charles McIlvaine left West Point with a world view of religious piety and respect in war for the rights of the innocent.

While slavery was called "an odious institution" in Paley's *Moral Philosophy*, "the emancipation of slaves should be gradual; and be carried on by provisions of law, and under the protection of civil government."<sup>50</sup> Christianity is the appropriate corrective accord-

<sup>44</sup> Emmerich de Vattel, *The Law of Nations or the Principles of Natural Law*, 1758 edition (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institute, 1916), p. x.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> William Rawle, *A View of the Constitution of the United States of America* (Philadelphia: Carey and Lea, 1825), p. 289.

<sup>47</sup> Vattel, *Law of Nations* p. xxiii.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 280.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 280-281.

<sup>50</sup> William Paley, *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* (Boston: West and Richardson, 1815), pp. 155, 157.

ing to Paley, “By the mild diffusion of its light and influence, the minds of men are . . . prepared to correct the enormities which folly, wickedness, or accident have introduced.”<sup>51</sup>

It is probably not necessary to point out that most of the cadets from the South, Beauregard, Davis, Lee, Magruder, and the two Johnstons, reflected on these texts quite seriously. The circulation records for the United States Military Academy library show that on February 23, 1828, Cadet R.E. Lee checked out Machiavelli’s *Art of War*; but it was probably for contrast rather than for memorization.<sup>52</sup>

Between 1828 and 1832 the textbooks in ethics were changed radically by Chaplain Thomas Warner, a native of New York. Warner started out by reviewing Vattel’s *Law of Nations* and Rawle’s *View of the Constitution* as the library records show, but by 1832 he had replaced both of these with Kent’s *Commentaries* which became the principle text for the cadets from 1832 to 1866 in whose number were Sherman, Grant, and Sheridan.<sup>53</sup> Why Warner changed texts is not known for certain, but the time frame is curiously close to the nullification controversy in South Carolina which had engaged the attention of the faculty and cadets alike.

The author of the next textbook, James Kent, was in 1829 a professor of law at Columbia, the President of the New York Historical Society, and Colonel Sylvanus Thayer’s personal friend. His *Commentaries on American Law*, published in 1826, combined a summary and critique of Vattel’s *Law of Nations* with a section on the American Constitution.

Kent’s book is in many ways the antithesis of Vattel’s *Law of Nations*. Kent criticized Vattel for his loose, tedious, and diffusive organization and for insufficiently supporting his arguments. Kent states that “There is no one work which combines . . . with entire satisfaction . . . a comprehensive view of the law of nations.”<sup>54</sup> But more significantly Kent believed in a pessimistic realism about human nature and about the practice of warfare which contrasts rather abruptly with Vattel’s optimistic approach.

For example, Kent begins his Third Lecture, “of the Declaration and other early measures of a state of war,” by contrasting Bacon’s statement that “War is one of the highest trials of

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 157. Remarkable parallels to this view on slavery occur in the letters of Robert E. Lee. See Fitzhugh Lee, *General Lee* (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1961), pp. 69, 228.

<sup>52</sup> USMA Library, Circulation Records 1824-1829, Cadets and Officers on Saturdays. USMA Archives. See also Douglas S. Freeman, *R. E. Lee: A Biography*, I, 78-79 for Lee’s reading list.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* Circulation Records for 1828 and 1829 show that Chaplain Warner checked out both Vattel and Rawle. He never returned Vattel’s *Law of Nations* so it is now 152 years overdue.

<sup>54</sup> James Kent, *Commentaries on American Law* (New York: O. Halsted, 1826), I, 18.

right . . . put upon the justice of God by an appeal to arms,” with Hobbes’ view that “continual war is a natural instinct of man in a savage state.”<sup>55</sup> Kent believed that man, without the social compact, reverted to a bestial state. War was “a dissolution of all moralities” and was fought between “all the individuals of the one, and all the individuals of which the other nation is composed.”<sup>56</sup> Retaliation was allowed in such a total war to restrain the enemy from further excess.<sup>57</sup>

One of the best protective measures against such chaos was a strong central government. Kent observed that “The history of the federal governments of Greece, Germany, Switzerland, and Holland, afford melancholy examples of destructive civil war springing from the disobedience of separate members.”<sup>58</sup> Therefore Kent believed that “Disobedience to the laws of the union must either be submitted to by the government to its own disgrace, or those laws must be enforced by arms.”<sup>59</sup>

Coupled with Kent’s total war theory and his unionist sentiments was his strong aversion to slavery. Kent’s solution to the slavery problem was not Christian persuasion as Paley had suggested, but violent, though legal, confrontation. Kent noted bluntly, “Pirates can be exterminated without declaration of war and the African slave trade is declared to be piracy by the statute laws of England and the United States.”<sup>60</sup>

How influential was Kent on the cadets after 1830? That question cannot be answered fully here. General Henry Halleck and others quoted Kent for academic reasons; William T. Sherman in 1875 told his son Tom, a law student at Yale, that Kent was “essential” for his education. But the point is that Kent’s philosophical concepts on war, the Union, and slavery are very similar to statements by Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, and, of course, many of the Union generals of 1861-65. In fact, if one reads the textbooks carefully, most of the ethical concepts of the Civil War, *i.e.*, secession, rebellion, gradual emancipation, abolition, total war, unconditional surrender, retaliation, and pillage were discussed at West Point in the Chaplain’s Course twenty years before the first gun was fired at Fort Sumter.<sup>61</sup>

The West Point chaplains evidently were very successful in their law or “ethics” courses, perhaps too successful. Sherman, for

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 45.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 53.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 89.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 199.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 179.

<sup>61</sup> Quoting the proof-texts would be too lengthy. Most of these concepts are in Rawle, Vattel, Paley, and Kent already cited. All of these original textbooks are in the USAM Archives Textbook Collection.

example, said that he was never “a Sunday School cadet,” but he was certainly interested in the law which he discussed repeatedly during his career.<sup>62</sup> Chaplain John W. French replaced Kent’s *Commentaries* with Halleck’s *International Law* survey in 1866; and the Academic Board decided in 1867, that the chaplain would teach only international, constitutional, and military law. History, geography, and ethics were dropped from the curriculum until Chaplain William Postlethwaite began teaching history again in 1883. When Chaplain Postlethwaite died in 1896, the Law Department took over most of the content of the old Chaplain’s Course. West Point chaplains thereafter restricted their duties to the religious needs of the Corps of Cadets until 1971 when Chaplain (Colonel) Joseph H. Beasley returned to the faculty to teach the History of World Religions and later in 1974, to teach the History of Western Ethics.

## A Shift In Influence

In 1882 General William T. Sherman, Commanding General of the Army of the United States, gave an address at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to the students in the School of Application.<sup>63</sup> He paid tribute to the officers of the American Revolution, “Putnam, Greene, Steuben, and Knox,” who laid the foundations of that order and good government which has formed the model for the new States to the present moment.”<sup>64</sup> He told the men that they must be patriotic and devoted to the nation’s interest “that as lieutenants you shall aid your captain in providing for the comfort, military discipline, and instruction of the men.”<sup>65</sup> In order to help them Sherman established a curriculum of geography, mathematics and law. “I do not mean the law in the common, technical, pettifogging sense, but in the highest sense, as taught by Kent, Blackstone, Montesquieu, and Vattel.”<sup>66</sup> “Civilization is based on law,” Sherman said, “on principles easily discovered and comprehended—‘do unto others as you would have them do unto you.’”<sup>67</sup> Man, Sherman believed, is often misled by his passions. “There is little difficulty in knowing what is right and lawful, but the trouble is in doing it. Every gentleman professing to be a soldier should read and understand Blackstone and Kent.”<sup>68</sup>

The seeds of the chaplains’ teaching at West Point from 1813 to 1896 bore fruit in rather strange ways. The old Chaplain’s Course

<sup>62</sup> Lloyd Lewis, *Sherman: Fighting Prophet*, p. 56.

<sup>63</sup> Later the Command and General Staff College. See William T. Sherman, *Address of W. T. Sherman to the Officers and Soldiers Composing the School of Application at Ft. Leavenworth* (Ft. Leavenworth, Kan.: School of Application, 1882), p. 1.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

became not only the forerunner of the Law Department at West Point but also of the course of instruction at Fort Leavenworth's Command and Staff School and at Fort Monroe's Artillery School which also taught geography, history, and law at Sherman's direction.

Yet the chaplains at West Point did not despair over the secularization of this part of their ministry because they made significant contributions in preaching, counseling, Sunday School organization, and in teaching an appreciation for classical literature and English grammar.<sup>69</sup> The chaplains' synthesis of religion, history, law, and ethics exemplified in the years 1813-1896 became the model for the Academy's separate departments of history, law, and English. At the end of the nineteenth century, chaplains were still performing a viable ministry at West Point, but they were not quite as influential or powerful as when they were professors of geography, history, and ethics.

<sup>69</sup> One reason chaplains were not replaced at West Point by purely secular teachers in the nineteenth century was their versatility. Adams wrote his own textbook in Ethics in 1838 and French wrote the textbook in English grammar which was used after 1860. They really functioned in a trichotomic way as pastors, preachers, and professors. They were replaced in the twentieth century by the departments of law, history, English, social studies, and geography; and not just by several instructors.

# Multi-Cultural Ministry And The Unit Ministry Team

Charles McDonnell

The support of the soldier's free exercise of religion is one of the most challenging missions in the Army chaplaincy today. It is a Constitutional guarantee and a moral obligation for each of us who takes the oath of office. Free exercise would be a simple matter if all of us held the same sort of faith. But we are a nation and an Army as varied in denominational expression as the total religious spectrum. We live in a nation where religious, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic pluralism is the rule. Our national motto *E Pluribus Unum* describes the American phenomenon. We are many seeking a oneness which is not a homogenized, unified religion, watered down beyond recognition; but a oneness of purpose, of toleration, of spiritual identity. I have a right to be unique—and to defend the rights of others to be unique.<sup>1</sup>

The chaplaincy mirrors the differences in American society. We have almost 100 denominations serving in the ranks of the chaplaincy. Nowhere in American religious society, however, can one find the cooperative and supportive spirit among religious folk to the extent we see it in the Army chaplaincy. Hospital, prison,

<sup>1</sup> This article is the text of a speech delivered at the Conference on Multi-Cultural Ministry in the US Army Chaplaincy meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, in the spring of 1987.

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Chaplain (Brigadier General) Charles J. McDonnell is Deputy Chief of Chaplains for the United States Army. Chaplain McDonnell previously served as Staff Chaplain, US Army Europe (USAREUR) and Seventh Army, Heidelberg, West Germany, and as Commandant of the US Army Chaplain Center and School, Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. His awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, Soldiers Medal, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Vietnamese Campaign Medal, and the Parachutist Badge. Father McDonnell is a Prelate of Honor to His Holiness John Paul II with the title of Monsignor granted in December of 1983.

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VA, and institutional ministries cannot compare with the collegial spirit we have in the Army chaplaincy. Having said that, let me hasten to add that we have to train continually in the area of Multi-cultural Ministry to maintain our current position.

## **An Army Of Differences**

We are a nation and an army of differences. From the beginning of our national history in the New World, the struggles between the different cultures that have made America were apparent. Martin Marty describes it as the “settling and unsettling of the land.” Native Americans saw the rising flood of Spanish, Portuguese, English, Dutch and French explorers. New World adventurers sought their fortune, and missionaries worked for the conversion of the heathen. It was clear from the beginning that although with great pain, difficulty, and prejudice America would be “settled and unsettled” simultaneously. Our destiny was to be multi-cultural, even though some Anglo-European values and traditions were to be pre-eminent. Blacks from Africa, indentured servants from Europe, impoverished laborers from the Orient, although brought to the New World by unscrupulous traders, survived and prevailed—to become valued and enriching threads in the American fabric of peoples.

What is an American? Its people have never been the selected aristocracy of the world’s nations, but as we read on the base of the Statue of Liberty, we are “the tired, poor, and huddled masses” of the world’s peoples. No one individual person or group of people make up America. We are a pluralistic nation.

This is the Bicentennial Year of the Constitution. The uniqueness of America is linked with that magnificent document and its creators. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall in a statement in the Washington Post described the Constitution as a “flawed document.” It permitted slavery to exist, discriminated against women, and had to be modified many times to achieve justice for all people. The Civil War and the civil rights struggles of the 60s bear poignant witness to its flaws. Marshall concluded that the very fact that the Constitution has been amended 26 times and still permits discrimination, injustices, and prejudice to exist testifies to the “imperfection of the document.”

While I disagree with Mr. Justice Marshall, I would not presume to correct him. It seems to me that the Constitution, while an imperfect document, is a political document. With its faults, it allows for growth. The genius of the Constitution, in addition to allowing personal freedoms to be balanced against societal needs, is that it permits orderly, considered changes to take place without abandoning the basic document. It is a living document, not one single effort frozen in history, decisive for all future societies. That to me is the greatness of the Constitution. “It is the right of the people



to alter, or abolish . . . ” reads one of the principle statements of the Declaration of Independence. It cannot legislate a change of people’s hearts, but it leads them in the right direction. Americans have lived with that philosophy, whatever their cultural heritage, for over two hundred years. The Constitution has served us well.

## **Religious Pluralism In The Army**

The importance of multi-cultural training cannot be overstated for today’s Army. It is not our goal as Unit Ministry Team members to make one religion in the military—some sort of military religion, or military Christianity, or even an amalgam of several faiths. Each of our expressions of faith has its own integrity. We have to learn more about one another, learn how to support one another, and learn to uphold our various ministries. I have used the word *learn* intentionally. Lack of knowledge leads to suspicion and misunderstanding.

Multi-cultural training seeks to defeat the ignorance and misunderstanding that leads to a denial of basic Constitutional liberties. In an Army of differences, we cannot be “all things to all people.” We can, however, and as chaplains and chaplain assistants, we must help all people to fulfill their potential through their religious faith. Respect for the rights of individuals does not end when we put on the uniform. Part of our ministry is to be religious advocates for soldiers. Commanders expect that from us. Soldiers need that from us. The French philosopher and jurist, Voltaire once said to one of his clients, “Although I do not agree with anything you have said, I will defend to the death your right to say it.” We may not agree with a certain religious practice or style of worship or music or method of prayer, but for that soldier it is his or her religious heritage. We have an obligation to support it.

## **Training In Multi-Cultural Ministry**

Current training for multi-cultural ministry focuses on issues at the grass-roots level. The grass-roots level for us is the ministry of the Unit Ministry Team at the battalion and brigade. A team, by definition, is “a group of people accomplishing a task that cannot be done alone.” Teams require teamwork. Good teams have a division of labor, sub-tasks and responsibilities. Effective teams share the workload and produce a superior product. The first mission of the Unit Ministry Team has to be “team building.” A team cannot function effectively unless it has settled basic issues:

Who’s in charge?

What’s the mission?

Who does what to accomplish the mission?

What personal needs must be met?

What time schedule must be followed?

At the multi-cultural conference this year, one third of those attending are chaplain assistants. Chaplain assistants are now included in the major study and decision-making committees at Department of Army level. We will be reflecting our UMT doctrine as we do this more and more.

The future of multi-cultural training looks challenging and exciting. Next year the training will focus on worship in a multi-cultural setting. Worship style, music, prayers, formal and free worship, denominational worship, ethnic needs, ecumenical events, lay led services and field services are some topics to be studied. In 1989 we will look at the installation religious program. Some of the areas to be considered are education, men's and women's groups, youth activities, groups for singles and couples, retreats and events across denominational lines. In 1990 the training will focus on emerging religious groups in the United States and the impact of religion on American operations overseas. The last year of the five-year cycle for multi-cultural training, 1991, will be a year for assessment and planning. This five-year cycle allows us to build on the previous year's work and encourages us to reach out for new areas of involvement in the ministry of the Unit Ministry Team.

Multi-cultural issues are soldiers' issues. Multi-cultural training is meant for the good of the whole Army and for the successful accomplishment of its mission. Currently the chaplaincy has the only viable program of education in multi-cultural issues in the Army. The issues we deal with are certainly our issues, but they are the commander's issues as well. The exportation of the skills learned in multi-cultural training depends on the efforts of each member of the Unit Ministry Team.

# The Protestant Problem

S. David Chambers

The National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces is the most pluralistically diverse religious association in the world.<sup>1</sup> This is true because the chaplaincies themselves have become the most pluralistically diverse of religious institutions. It has not always been so.

On 15 August 1945, the day of the Japanese surrender, there were 2,811 chaplains on active duty in the Navy. (I use the Navy because I am more familiar with its history.) Of this number, approximately 28% were Roman Catholic, less than 1% were Jewish and the remainder, 1,985 chaplains, were classified as Protestant. Of the total number of Protestant chaplains, 91.5% were from six Protestant faith groups: Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist and Congregational—Christian for a total of 1,820 chaplains. The remaining 175 chaplains, or 8.5% came from 19 other faith groups including one from the Russian Orthodox Church, six from the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, one from the Christian Science Church, fourteen Unitarians, four Universalists, one Quaker and others.

There are today 83 faith groups represented in the Navy chaplaincy. This is far more reflective of the national religious scene than the earlier days of World War II; however the multiplicity of

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<sup>1</sup> This article was first presented as a speech before the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces meeting in Alexandria, Virginia, on October 26, 1983.

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Chaplain S. David Chambers entered the Navy during World War II, served as a chaplain stateside, shipboard, overseas and with the Marines. He retired from the service in 1970. In December 1983 he retired as director of the Presbyterian Council for Chaplains after 13 years as an endorser. During this time he was an architect and first chairman of the Conference of Ecclesiastical Endorsing Agents, the forerunner of National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces.

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diversity has created what some refer to as "The Protestant Problem."

Before beginning this discussion of the "Problem," however, permit me to make some personal observations:

1. I approach this discussion with some apprehension. But I would not have accepted the task if I were not convinced that the Conference has progressed to the point where we can raise issues of concern and deal with them openly and forthrightly in the spirit of mutual regard and respect for each other. I am committed to the legitimacy and integrity of every faith group represented in the chaplaincies of the armed forces. I am also committed to tangling with knotty concerns sincerely, amicably, and in the spirit of our profession. If, as a Conference, we are not at present sufficiently mature to handle these issues, perhaps by the conclusion of our discussion we will have, at least, grown into a greater maturity.

2. Individual faith groups, ecclesiastical endorsers, and the Conference may observe areas of concern that the military may or may not see. In which case, it is incumbent upon us to raise issues, to dialogue among ourselves and with the members of the Armed Forces Chaplains Board and to resolve, if possible, what may appear to be areas of concern.

3. I trust that we would not raise more problems than can be amicably solved, leaving a residue of mistrust and animosity. This would be unfortunate not only for the Conference but for the chaplaincies themselves. The unique institution of the chaplaincy has come about, in all of its diversity, because faith groups, committed military personnel and chaplains, have sought a vital, vibrant ministry within the armed forces. Ours is a trust to ensure that this continues.

## **The Problem Of Identity**

The first Protestant problem is one of identity: who is a Protestant? In 1941-1945 when dog tags were being issued by the thousands to personnel of the armed forces, the identification designations were three: C for Roman Catholic, J for Jewish, and P for Protestant. If one was not a J or a C, one was automatically a P. Chaplains were also classified in this way. Even a Russian Orthodox priest was categorized as P.

Today dog tags carry the following identifications: Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Jewish, No Preference, or by the specific religious faith group of one's affiliation including "Protestant—No Preference." The histories of the chaplaincies of each branch of the service include in the Protestant category all faith groups other than Roman Catholic, Jewish, and Orthodox. As of this date, the Armed Forces Chaplains Board has approved 137 faith groups for the chaplaincies. Delete seven Orthodox groups, the Roman Catholic

Church and three Jewish groups and there are remaining approximately 125 faith groups which fall by default into the unofficial general category of Protestant. An analysis of these Protestant faith groups would point up four distinctions:

1. Some faith groups accept the classification “Protestant” and all other faith groups recognize them as such, *e.g.*, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ, etc.

2. Some faith groups prefer not to be known as “Protestant,” but generally are regarded as such by all others in the Protestant community, *e.g.*, Episcopalian, Baptist, Churches of Christ, etc.

3. Some faith groups would prefer not to be known as “Protestant,” and most other faith groups would concur, *e.g.*, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

4. Some faith groups are satisfied to be categorized as “Protestant,” but some other faith groups would question the identification, *e.g.*, Unitarian, Universalist, Christian Science, etc.

The “Problem with Identity,” therefore is:

—What faith groups belong in the Protestant category?

—Who would make the determination?

—What classification would be given to those who are now called “Protestant,” but who would elect or be determined to be otherwise?

To fragment the designations for the Protestant group would add to the complexity of nomenclature, but it might resolve part of the Protestant Problem. To recognize differences and to face up to them would require different assignment policies, but the result might be a more realistic alignment of faith groups. In the past, many persons have long recognized these distinctions, but have agreed to live with the pluralistic differences in the interest of a mutually cooperative ministry. Have the chaplaincies now moved beyond that? If so, how do they, or we, proceed?

## **The Problem Of Worship**

The problem of identity is a theological problem. The problem of worship is a pragmatic problem. If it is difficult to determine who is Protestant, it is equally difficult to determine what is Protestant worship. There are indeed three aspects to the problem of Protestant worship:

1. The Individual Services of Worship.

2. The General Protestant Service of Worship.

3. The Proliferation of Protestant Forms of Worship.

## **Individual Services Of Worship**

The individual services of worship are those which are denominational, cultural, or ethnic. Many denominations for years have

provided services for their own constituency: the Episcopal Church, the Lutheran Churches, the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, the Christian Science Church, the Churches of Christ and a few others. When appropriately identified, they have not posed a problem within the Protestant worshipping community provided the chaplains did not concentrate upon their own communities to the degree that ministry to all others suffered. Where this has occurred, however, the problem has generally been resolved at the local level of supervision.

In this last decade, two other forms of individual services have become prevalent; *i.e.*, the cultural Gospel Service and ethnic services. The Gospel Service has made its mark on most military communities and in some areas draws a larger attendance than the General Protestant Service. The questions therefore are:

—Is it to be viewed as a “second class” service?

—Is it to be relegated to Chapel Number 10 at the other end of the Post or Base?

—Should it be given “prime time” at 1100 hours on Sunday morning in the main chapel of the installation?

The growing number of ethnic services are designed to meet the special needs of nationalities. These include Korean, Hispanic, Samoan, Guamanian, and Philippine services. Rather than posing a problem, these are a blessing for the worshipping community of that ethnic heritage. Yet some persons find these denominational, cultural, and ethnic services to be, if not a problem, at least an aggravation in that they fragment the unity of the Protestant worshipping community; siphon off leadership from the general worship; and dilute the strength of the overall religious program.

## **The General Protestant Service**

The General Protestant Service is at the heart of the problem of Protestant worship. Let me say peripherally that technically there is no such thing as a General Protestant Service. *General*—although the word is awkward—is merely a convenient, though ambiguous, term for “inclusive.” We live with the term “General Protestant” for want of a better name.

What constitutes a so-called General Protestant Service?

—If a Presbyterian chaplain conducts a service from the Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer*, is it an Episcopal service? a Presbyterian service? a General Protestant service? or what?

—If an LDS chaplain conducts a service according to the liturgy of the Lutheran Church, is it a Lutheran service? an LDS service? a General Protestant service? or what?

—If a Baptist chaplain offers the Holy Communion using the Methodist Order of Worship with only Roman Catholics present,

is it a Baptist service? a Methodist service? a General Protestant service? a Roman Catholic service? or what?

Is the nature of a General Protestant service determined by the liturgy? the faith group of the chaplain? the communicants present? or by its intended purpose, *viz.*, to provide a worship experience for those who are called “Protestant?”

We would agree, I believe, that in a General Protestant Service it does not matter who may choose to attend as long as the service is intended for those who are Protestant. To some the form of the worship and leadership of the General Protestant Service are incidental. To others, however, form of worship and leadership are critical. It is at this juncture that the Protestant Problem of worship occurs.

—When a chaplain, not considered to be Protestant by some faith groups, is assigned on a regular basis to conduct the General Protestant Service, there is a problem.

—When two chaplains of incompatible faith groups are assigned to conduct worship conjointly, there is a problem.

—When an unacceptable form of worship for one chaplain is determined by another, usually a senior, there is a problem.

—When a female chaplain conducts the worship and administers the sacraments to communicants whose faith groups do not recognize the ordination of women, there is a problem.

The examples could go on. In the last analysis, the primary issue to some in this aspect of the Problem of Protestant Worship is essentially, once again, the Problem of Protestant Identity: Who is a Protestant and should not Protestant worship be conducted, except in unusual circumstances, by one who is Protestant?

## **The Proliferation Of Protestant Forms Of Worship**

When six major faith groups provided 90% of the chaplaincy’s Protestant worship, there was a fair degree of uniformity. Chaplains were able to exhibit sufficient flexibility to accommodate their forms of worship to that of their colleagues and to fit a general form of worship utilized in most chapel settings. As the number of faith groups has increased, however, the variety of forms of worship have multiplied as well. Chaplains now represent all degrees of liturgy, non-liturgy, and a-liturgy. All extremes of ordered and free worship are present in the chaplaincy.

Some chaplains have never conducted a service. This is not because they are inexperienced clergy, but rather because in their tradition the clergy only deliver the sermon. Lay persons conduct the worship services. To deviate from this tradition would be for some chaplains a matter of conscience. Not to deviate becomes a problem in worship leadership.

It has long been recognized that every chaplain, to use the

wording of Navy Regulations of 1860, "shall be permitted to conduct worship according to the manner and form of the church of which he may be a member." The Army and Air Force are in agreement with this also. Furthermore, it has long been accepted that a chaplain of the Episcopal Church has the prerogative not to celebrate communion with chaplains of other faith groups; that Missouri Synod Lutheran chaplains may hold closed communion; that Baptist chaplains shall not baptize infants; that those who choose not to wear ecclesiastical garb are justified in conducting worship in civilian or military attire if they should desire.

There are three parties to the ministry within the armed forces: the government, the worshiping community, and the churches. The First Amendment to the Constitution establishes the religious neutrality of the government. It also provides for the right of the individual member of the armed forces to have access to the worship of his or her own choice when possible and provides for the pluralism of the chaplaincies. The position of the third party, the churches of America, is a recognition of the two clauses together that only by a mutual respect and understanding will the system work. It calls, and today begs, for cooperative co-existence with some semblance of form and identity for worship.

Military congregations, on the other hand, are amazing in their ability to adapt when subjected to change in worship styles. They are exceedingly resilient in the face of pluralism of today's chaplaincies. Some, however, are raising the question as to whether it would be possible to reduce the smorgasbord of forms of worship to which congregations are subjected by adopting certain elements of worship that most appropriately belong in the worship experience. This pertains to the administration of the sacraments as well.

Chaplains exist in the military first, last, and always to provide opportunity for the military community to exercise its right for worship. The focus must be upon the worshippers and their spiritual needs and enrichment; not upon chaplains with their likes and dislikes. The first question is therefore: How can chaplains of diverse traditions provide meaningful worship to the greatest number of parishioners without compromising the essential tenets of their own tradition?

Worship situations differ with varying duty assignments. On large installations with a number of chaplains, representing a variety of forms of worship, the situation can be remedied through different styles of worship provided at differing times to meet the multiple worshiping needs of the religious community. However, when a single chaplain ministers to all of the religious community, it is totally unjust to 90% of the community when the form of worship speaks only to 10% and no effort to accommodate to the needs of the large body of neglected worshippers is made.



This becomes a critical issue in the problem of Protestant worship when a chaplain gathers a small, albeit enthusiastic, following to the exclusion of the majority of the religious community because the chaplain will not deviate from a certain faith group tradition and remains unwilling to broaden the ministry to meet the demands of the pluralism of the environment. "Cooperation without compromise," is not a cliché. It is the ground upon which the chaplaincy has effectively ministered to the diverse military community in the past.

The religious program on military installations is not a chaplain program. It is a command religious program. From the Secretary of Defense down to the commander of the local unit each level of command is charged with the responsibility for providing, in so far as is feasible, the opportunity for worship. The chaplain, by virtue of ordination, is the facilitator or implementor of the program for all faith groups, not merely his or her own.

Therefore a second question is: If a chaplain or a faith group cannot accommodate ministry to the needs of the pluralistic religious community, does the faith group or its clergy belong in the military environment?

The Problem of Protestant Worship, as it relates to the proliferation of faith groups, is exacerbated by denominations that:

1. Provide an ecclesiastical endorsement *pro forma* to clergy upon request;
2. Offer no selective screening of candidates for the chaplaincies;
3. Provide no instruction nor orientation about the nature of this pluralistic ministry or how to function within it; and
4. Conduct no continuing contact with their chaplains after endorsement to see how they are functioning and to provide counsel to them when needed.

Therefore a third question is: How can this conference bring into its fellowship those endorsers, who are not present and never have been, or apprise them of the distinctiveness and the challenge of the specialized ministry to the members of the military community?

## **The Problem Of Logistics**

If the Problem of Identity is theological and the Problem of Worship is pragmatic, the Problem of Logistics is financial. Not too many years ago the ministry within the military survived financially on a shoestring. It was funded variously from voluntary chapel funds, contributions from recreation funds and a dribble of coins from appropriated funds. When it was accepted that the chaplain was as fully a member of the command staff as the motor transport officer,

however, the religious program began to be funded in the same way as the vehicles of motor transportation. Operation and maintenance funds were released for the support of the religious program so that today chapel monies are used extensively for ecclesiastical mission projects and appropriated monies are used to fund the religious program.

At large installations it is not uncommon to find among thirty chaplains fifteen different faith groups represented. Each chaplain wants his or her own religious literature; *i.e.*, tracts, devotional books, worship bulletins, song books, certificates of baptism, marriage, and confirmation. At some installations this multiplication has become a logistical nightmare and in some cases a financial fiasco. When chaplains are transferred to other duty assignments, thousands of pieces of denominational materials rest unused on storeroom shelves. In time these items are discarded and represent significant financial waste.

## **One Final Observation**

Some view these issues and questions and declare that there is "no problem." Others view these tensions and conflicts and say that they will seriously weaken or destroy the chaplaincy. The truth must lie between these extremes. In any case, it is well for the churches who provide the men and women for this ministry to reflect on these things.

# Theological Pluralism In The Air Force Chaplaincy

Paul Otterstein

The United States Air Force Chaplaincy is by constitutional necessity composed of clergy from the broad spectrum of American religion. In theory, every formally constituted religious group in the United States has the right to be represented by its clergy or other designated leaders in the military chaplaincies. In practice, this is very nearly accomplished. Only limited resources and the practical requirements for a formal definition of "religious group," for some system of bureaucratic management, and for setting objective standards of service circumscribe representative participation. The impetus for the military chaplaincies and basic shape and structure are implied in the "nonestablishment" and "free exercise" provisions of the Bill of Rights. The later provision implies the responsibility of the government to provide for access to religious life impeded by the special circumstance of military service. The former requires that the government's exercise of that responsibility stop short of direct sponsorship of religion. The result is a unique and pluralistic system.

The chaplaincy pattern of cooperative pluralism, as it now operates, begins with the appointment of chaplains on the basis of a system of denominational quotas. The church membership is reported annually in the Yearbook of American Churches, and is designed to reflect faith-

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Chaplain Major Paul Otterstein completed a year of study at the University of Chicago Divinity School before beginning his present assignment with the 377 Combat Support Wing, Ramstein Air Base, West Germany. He is a member of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, a graduate of Valparaiso University, Indiana, and Christ Seminary-Seminex, St. Louis. Before entering the military, he served as parish pastor in Washington, D.C., and as Director of Community Services for Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area.

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fully the religious complexion of the American population at large . . .<sup>1</sup>

Organizationally, the American military chaplaincies are fully integrated. In contrast to the chaplaincies of certain other nations, where there are parallel Protestant and Roman Catholic chaplaincies, each with its own Chief of Chaplains and organizational structure, our chaplaincies are administratively unified. A Roman Catholic senior chaplain may, and frequently does, supervise the work of a group of chaplains made up not only of other Roman Catholics but also Protestants of a variety of denominations, and perhaps Jewish, Latter-Day Saints, and Orthodox chaplains as well. The same title, "chaplain," is used to address priests, rabbis, and ministers alike. The Chief of Chaplains may be of any religion. Administratively, there is no distinction.

Religiously, however, each chaplain's ministry is determined by his own church. The right of the chaplain to conduct public worship—and by implication his entire ministry—in accordance with the rites, rules and practices of his own church is carefully detailed in the official regulations of all the services. This clear distinction between the administrative area, which is completely integrated, and the religious area, which is completely uncoerced, is the working basis of the chaplain's ministry to a pluralistic society.<sup>2</sup>

While each chaplain retains the right and responsibility to function as a minister of his own religious group or denomination, chaplains also operate according to a tradition of "mutual responsibility." This tradition requires that chaplains not only serve the members of their own or similar groups, but also make provisions for those of other (sometimes significantly "other") groups. Richard Hutcheson, Jr., sums up this tradition in his book, *The Church and the Chaplaincy*.

1. The chaplain is generally responsible for meeting the religious needs of all personnel of the command he serves by scheduling divine services in the command or offering access to services elsewhere, for all groups, insofar as it is possible.
2. He personally provides the liturgical, sacramental, and pastoral ministries for those in the command who are of his own faith or denominational group, on as inclusive a

<sup>1</sup> Richard G. Hutcheson, Jr., *The Churches and the Chaplaincy* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

basis as his own church and the churches of those being served will permit.

3. He arranges for the services of other chaplains, auxiliary chaplains, civilian clergymen, or lay leaders in the command, or sends “church parties” (groups of worshippers) elsewhere, to meet the needs of those he cannot serve personally.

4. He holds himself in readiness to assist other commands which may need his services to provide for personnel of his faith or denominational group.<sup>3</sup>

The organization of the chaplaincies is presently further defined by administrative division into three “major faith groups:” Jewish, Catholic and Protestant. While the Jewish and Catholic faith groups may be construed as having specific theological and ecclesiastical character, this cannot be said of the Protestant group. The functional definition of a “Protestant” in this instance means simply to be religious, but not Catholic or Jewish. While such groups as the Eastern Orthodox have been allowed considerable practical autonomy, they are still technically part of the Protestant “major faith group” along with Unitarians, Seventh Day Adventists, Pentecostals, Lutherans, Methodists, Baptists (American, Southern, Independent, Bible, etc.) and approximately eighty other denominations presently officially represented.

While the above description applies to the military chaplaincies of all the service branches (Army, Navy/Marine, Coast Guard and Air Force), there are distinct differences in circumstance and style between the branches. With a few significant exceptions (education programs, certain specialized ministries, and administrative roles) Air Force chaplains conduct their ministries at medium or large installations (Air Force “bases”) using a “chapel centered” model. Two to thirty chaplains (depending on the size of an installation) comprise a central staff working “out of” one or more chapels. Within the “major faith group” divisions, these chaplains coordinate and conduct worship services, programs of religious education, counseling, and other programs of pastoral ministry. Chaplains of the Protestant major faith group always conduct a common program of ministry including a “General Protestant” worship service, religious education, youth work and other programs. In addition, specialized programs of ministry may be conducted by Protestant chaplains. These programs often include worship services such as a “[Black] Gospel Service,” a “Liturgical Service,” specific denominational service, etc. All chaplains, without regard to major faith group, participate in a public ministry of presence and pastoral/religious

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 118-119.

concern to the various organizational elements of the base community through counseling (where specific religious group is not an issue), regular visitation, public speaking, public invocations, and the like.

In a setting where the mission is defined simply as “to serve God and the Air Force community by being a visible reminder of the Holy, and creating and fostering an environment where persons are encouraged and assisted in their personal, moral, religious, and spiritual growth,”<sup>4</sup> the Air Force chaplaincy is a locus of professional religious practice where religious and theological pluralism take on concentrated and specialized importance.

This article relates the contemporary discourse in the area of theological pluralism to the pluralist circumstance of the U.S. Air Force chaplaincy. In the chaplaincy today pluralism is spoken of as a way of life, as a largely realized goal. But as David Tracy points out, plurality is a fact; pluralism is one interpretation of that fact. Pluralism is an attitude that one must grow to respect and trust. Of special significance to the chaplaincy is that it clearly cannot be meaningfully imposed by any hierarchical or administrative means. One’s attitude toward pluralism develops through encounter—first with its reality, then with its problems and possibilities.

The anatomy of the “pluralist circumstance” of the chaplaincy (which has a dominant intra-Christian character) is explored in this article in the light of wider current efforts to understand theological pluralism. The first and chief obstacle to constructive growth in theological pluralism in the Air Force chaplaincy is the latent impression that it’s not much of an issue. The article makes the case for the existence of profound theological pluralism in the chaplaincy and then characterizes the special problems and issues this pluralism brings to an organization with the unusual structure and purpose of the chaplaincy. The cutting edge for theological pluralism in the chaplaincy concerns what Hutcheson describes as “the phrase that has become the motto of the Navy Chaplain Corps, ‘Cooperation without Compromise.’”<sup>5</sup> Is it possible to achieve this without throwing theology overboard?

What directions seem hopeful and helpful for continuing understanding and development with regard to theological pluralism and the chaplaincy? We may not be as far along the road to mutual understanding as some theologians seem to think, but there is promise in the development of a “polar” philosophical framework; a view where divergence is not simply acceptable, but necessary for each theological viewpoint to be what it is. Such a framework could provide a place for genuine theological dialogue: space—where

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of the Air Force, Regulation 265-1, Section A (1), *Air Force Regulations* (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters US Air Force, 18 Sep 1981), paragraph 1, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Hutcheson, p. 119.

something like David Tracy's "analogical imagination" might have room to work.

## The "Pluralist Circumstance"

At first view, the issue of theological pluralism in an institution where only Christians and Jews are officially represented might seem almost parochial. At a time when "theological dialogue" practically presumes the participation of one or more "non-Western" major world religions (*i.e.* Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam), the idea that predominantly Christian and wholly "Judeo-Christian" institution like the United States Air Force chaplaincy is currently struggling with problems of theological pluralism may seem surprising and perhaps trivial. In 1955 Will Herberg wrote:

Interfaith (activity) in this country is the device that American experience has elaborated for bringing some measure of harmony among the religious communities and in some degree mitigating their tensions and suspicions. It is made possible by their common grounding in the American Way of Life and their feeling that despite all differences of creed, "brotherhood" and "affirmative co-operative action" among Protestants, Catholics, and Jews is not only possible and desirable but is also in a sense mandatory if American democracy is to function properly. Interfaith (activity) in the American sense is America's answer to the problem of religious divisiveness in a society structured along religio-communal lines.<sup>6</sup>

In historical perspective Herberg can now be seen reflecting the cooperation, positive, and relatively tranquil religious spirit of a decade. The same optimism occurs in other religious commentators of the period. H. Richard Niebuhr, for example, makes the following observation in reference to intra-Christian relations:

. . . it becomes clear to one who listens sympathetically and attentively to what is going on . . . that there is a greater common denominator among these conservatives and liberals, these strict and latitudinarian constructionists. There is more of the whole Biblical content in the thought of most "Fundamentalists" than "liberals" believe. Conversely there is far more Biblical knowledge and conviction in the liberal mind than ultra-conservatism imagines.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1955), pp. 261-262.

<sup>7</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1956), p. 40.

What even those insightful writers could not have foreseen was the explosive and radically altering social and religious developments that have unfolded in the United States in the three decades since their comments. Times have changed.

Fundamental cleavages in American Protestantism that appeared dead or dying in the fifties were merely 'sleeping'. The primary rift had its roots in the popular rise of historical consciousness in nineteenth century America. The Fundamentalist/Modernist controversy was the sharpest early confrontation between those who wished to build on the new perspective and those who chose to resist. The controversy peaked in the early 1920s, and the modernists won a clear victory. Although defeated, the forces of fundamentalism went underground. When liberal ideas, heavily dependent on notions of progress and human development, proved vulnerable in the face of declining economic circumstances, world wars, and the Holocaust, neo-orthodoxy ushered in a major correction. And while current commentators have shown how neo-orthodoxy champions like Karl Barth have "in a major sense (continued) the liberal tradition,"<sup>8</sup> they were nevertheless popularly cheered and appropriated by "ahistorical" forces happy to see traditional liberal positions challenged. As George Marsden and others have traced,<sup>9</sup> fundamentalism and its commitment to ahistorical notions of authority and corollaries such as scriptural inerrancy were carried along, traveled through relatively quiet times like Herberg's and Niebuhr's 50s, underwent changes and emerged, among other ways, in a more culturally attuned "neo-evangelicalism" in the 70s.<sup>10</sup>

In the 1920s respected leaders from both sides of the serious theological debate characterized their positions as representing not differing viewpoints of the same religion, but entirely different religions.<sup>11</sup> While it is no doubt true that one period or one decade simply trades its particular naiveté for another, it would seem accurate from the present vantage point to see the tendency of the 50s to minimize the theological divergences present in American

<sup>8</sup> David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order* (Minneapolis: The Winston-Seabury Press, 1975), p. 27.

<sup>9</sup> George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 184-195.

<sup>10</sup> For a journey through some of the "ins and outs" of the fundamentalist-evangelical journey from the 20s to the 70s see Martin E. Marty, *A Nation of Behavers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976). pp. 80-105.

<sup>11</sup> Princeton's J. Gresham Machen took the position that the two theological camps, which he designated "Christian" and "liberal," represented two completely different religions. Machen even avoided using the term "fundamentalist," in part because "to use such a term would imply that there are Christian subcategories of which liberalism might be one." Union Seminary's Harry Emerson Fosdick suggested that the choice was not "between liberalism and orthodoxy, but . . . between liberalism and no Christianity at all." See William R. Hutchison, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 262, 280.



Christianity as that decade's special blind spot. The false optimism of the ecumenical spirit of the 60s and the 70s was a continuation of this naiveté and representative of the lingering myth of dominance present in the "mainline" Protestant denominations. But in the 80s, resurgent evangelicalism has successfully exposed this myth and its whimsical fantasy of converging Protestant theology. As in the 20s, there is today good reason to suppose that various theological positions within American Christianity and within Protestantism represent divergences as great as those that separate different religions.

Paul Tillich defined religion as "the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern." This is "a concern which qualifies all other concerns as preliminary and which itself contains the answer to the question of the meaning of our life."<sup>12</sup> In his *Systematic Theology*, Tillich elaborates:

Ultimate concern is the abstract translation of the great commandment, "The Lord, our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your soul. and with all your mind, and with all your strength." (*Mark* 12:29, RSV) . . . The ultimate concern is unconditional, independent of any conditions of character, desire, or circumstance. The unconditional concern is total: no part of ourselves or of our world is excluded from it; there is no "place" to flee from it. (*Psalms* 139) The total concern is infinite: no moment of relaxation and rest is possible in the face of a religious concern which is ultimate, unconditional, total, and infinite.<sup>13</sup>

Given this definition for "religion," it is possible to see why Tillich accorded the status of "quasi-religion" to such secular based movements as Fascism and Communism. In fact, Tillich believed that the primary encounter taking place among world religions in the "contemporary" (60s) circumstance was the encounter between these "quasi-religions" and traditional world religions, both theistic and non-theistic.<sup>14</sup> The key in evaluating religion is not self description in overt, traditional, or even clear theological language, but rather whatever emerges as "ultimate concern." Tillich believed that there is an inescapable "existential" quality to religious experience, and that this quality is implied by the word "concern." "That which is ultimate . . . is the correlate of an unconditional concern but not a 'highest thing' called 'the absolute' or 'the unconditioned,' about

<sup>12</sup> Paul Tillich, *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), p.4.

<sup>13</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 11-12.

<sup>14</sup> Tillich, *Encounter*, p. 12.

which we could argue in detached objectivity.” Crediting Kierkegaard, he says, it “is a matter of infinite passion and interest, making us its object whenever we try to make it our object.”<sup>15</sup> Christianity is not believing a certain dogma or following a certain morality. It’s more fundamental than that.

Is it possible that differing theological understandings within Christianity and within Protestantism are representative of fundamentally different “religions” in the Tillichian and Kierkegaardian senses? It certainly seems so. The idea expressed by Machen and Fosdick that “Christianity” includes elements not genuinely Christian has been around for a long time. Reviewing the history of Christianity’s rejection of other religions, John Hick observes that in 1302 the papal pronouncement of Boniface VIII declared, “We are required by faith to believe and hold that there is one holy, catholic and apostolic Church; we firmly believe it and unreservedly profess it; outside it there is neither salvation nor remission of sins . . . Further, we declare, say, define and proclaim that to submit to the Roman Pontiff is for every human creature an utter necessity of salvation.” And in 1960 the Protestant Evangelical-fundamentalist Congress on World Mission at Chicago declared: “In the years since the war, more than one billion souls have passed into eternity and more than half of these went to the torment of hell fire without even hearing of Jesus Christ, who He was or why he died on the cross of Calvary. (*Facing the Unfinished Task: Messages Delivered at the Congress on World Mission*, Chicago, Ill., 1960, ed. J.O. Percy, p. 9; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1961.)” “The main difference,” Hick then observes, “between the medieval Catholic dogmas and this is that whereas the former assumed that Christians are those owing obedience to the pope, the latter is inclined to doubt whether the pope and his followers are Christians at all!”<sup>16</sup>

It is interesting to reflect on the fact that recent efforts to provide a basis for theological dialogue among major world religions (John Hick, Paul Knitter)<sup>17</sup> have focused on the need for a reworking of traditional Christology. Hick observes:

. . . to refrain from absolute and exclusive claims is harder for some traditions than for others. For the great business of religion is salvation, the bringing of men and women to fullness of life or perfection of being in relation to the Eternal One. And so religious absolutism takes the form of a claim to be the sole way of salvation. It is not, I would think, too difficult for Judaism to

<sup>15</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 12.

<sup>16</sup> John Hick, *God Has Many Names* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982), p. 30.

<sup>17</sup> Hick, *Names*, and Paul F. Knitter, *No Other Name?* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1985).

avoid making such a claim. The key concept here is that of God's Chosen People. But this need not mean, and has indeed perhaps never meant, that there is salvation only for Jews. Rather it represents the awareness of a divine vocation to bear witness to God for the good of all mankind. But such an awareness is presumably compatible with others having their own religious vocations. Indeed, every encounter with the Eternal One, when it takes a theistic form, involves a sense of being specifically called, and thus chosen. We are all, I would say, chosen people, though chosen in different ways for different vocations.

But it is much harder for Christianity to digest the fact of religious pluralism. Here the key concept is that of divine incarnation. . . .<sup>18</sup>

That the doctrine of the incarnation gives Christian theology a special "stand-apart" character was affirmed by Tillich.

Christian theology . . . implies the claim that it is *the* theology. The basis of this claim is the Christian doctrine that the Logos became flesh, that the principle of the divine self revelation has become manifest in the event "Jesus as the Christ." If this message is true, Christian theology has received a foundation which transcends the foundation of any other theology and which itself cannot be transcended.<sup>19</sup>

Christology is, indeed, a central problem in Christianity's relationship with other religions. It introduces an absolutism that makes it difficult for Christianity to regard other religions as anything other than, at best, junior partners or "partial" revelations and, at worst, false religions leading to damnation. This same concern for "the one, true way," centering on the issue of the person of Christ himself (who he is, what he accomplished, how one benefits from this, and so on), also forms the basis for the rejection of one "Christian" group by another. This central "problem" for Christianity's relationship with other religions may also be the primary occasion for relationship difficulties between different groups within Christianity. In other words, problems of theological pluralism in an intra-Christian or Judeo-Christian context such as the Air Force chaplaincy may exhibit many of the very same difficulties as problems of theological pluralism between Christianity and other (non-Western) world religions.

If Christology—that is, correct Christology—is an inhibiting

<sup>18</sup> Hick, pp. 57-58.

<sup>19</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, p. 16.

issue, then genuine intra-Christian theological pluralism may exist insofar as significantly alternative "Christian" Christologies become alternative "ultimate concerns," alternative "commitments," that grasp the being of those who become bound to them.

Knitter's analysis of Christian attitudes toward religious pluralism centers on significantly divergent views of Christology.<sup>20</sup> The "conservative evangelical model" affirms the Bible as the only source of revelation and sets forth the biblical verdict that faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the only means of salvation. The "mainline Protestant model" allows for alternative "universal" forms of revelation, but still reserves exclusive soteriological status for Jesus, the Christ. The tension between these two models can be understood in terms of the crisis in historical consciousness discussed earlier. The conservative evangelical distrusts the basis of authority on which the mainline Protestant claims his special status for Jesus. Even though the actual place given Jesus in terms of the soteriological function is similar, the conservative evangelical questions the authenticity of the mainliner's Christological formulation because he or she cannot observe any valid ground on which the mainliner presents his Christ. Hence the conservative evangelical may conclude that the mainliner's Christ is a different Christ. The "Catholic model" moves beyond either Protestant model in that it claims that Christian religions must look on other religions as "possible ways of salvation."<sup>21</sup> But as it does this, it makes members of other religions "anonymous Christians" (to use older language); it "continues to affirm . . . that Christ must be proclaimed as the fullest revelation, the definitive savior, the normal above all other norms for all religions."<sup>22</sup> Indeed, it would seem that one could begin to "map" the principal intra-Christian "religions" according to their differing Christological views (as Knitter has, in a sense, done). One could receive helpful guidance in understanding "real" intra-Christian theological divergences by carefully hearing and noting varying attitudes within Christianity toward "other than Christian" religions.

In *Analogical Imagination*, David Tracy points to the incredibly complex setting in which theological pluralism is encountered; differences in both situation and tradition are many. Yet the importance of these differences eventually comes to bear on "the Christ event."<sup>23</sup> And in terms of the present discussion—that is, in

<sup>20</sup> See Knitter, pp. 97-167.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 142.

<sup>23</sup> Tracy writes: "Any observer of contemporary Christian theology cannot avoid noticing how pluralistic, how diverse, even how conflicting are the theological interpretations of Christianity in our period. Nor is that cause for either surprise or despair. If the systematic theologian must correlate an interpretation of Christianity with an interpretation of the situation, the interpretations, as personal responses, are likely to prove as conflicting as the situation itself, and as diverse as the Christian

terms of discovering the degree of substantive theological pluralism within Christianity and within Protestantism—the focus on Christology seems to suggest the potential for intra-Christian pluralism is as substantive as that between Christianity (or, more accurately, between different theologically defined groups within Christianity) and other (non-Western) world religions. If Christianity's fundamental theological problem in its relationship with other religions is seen in terms of its exclusive or even (as in the Catholic case) inclusive claims for Christ, and if different groups within Christianity have differing attitudes towards other religions on the basis of their differing claims for Christ, differing claims for Christ may provide the basis for fundamental theological problems with one another. A part of the confusion presently felt with regard to theological pluralism stems from the hesitance to apply genuinely theological criteria to the assessment of theologies within traditions.

It is often observed today that part of the “new” pluralist reality is that one cannot make assumptions about where a particular theologian (or a particular priest, minister, or chaplain) may be “coming from” in his own approach to theological issues on the basis of the positions represented by his or her denomination or church group. Yet broad assumptions are easily made about “Christian” views or “Protestant” views, particularly when entering the interreligious realm. While some of this is probably unavoidable and even helpful in the context, it can and, I believe, does contribute to confusion over the significance of theological divergence within Christianity and within Protestantism. Where significant theological pluralism exists but is overlooked, denied, simplified or ordered according to nontheological criteria, increased theological confusion is a necessary result. This, I believe, is what is happening (perhaps among other places) in the Air Force chaplaincy today. The tendency, need or even considered mandate to overlook serious theological divergence—to deny genuine theological pluralism—may cause spiritual and personal hurt, bruised consciences, open and suppressed anger, and increased misunderstanding and confusion. Theological language is avoided in part to deny that serious theological problems exist. The secular languages of administration,

tradition. It is not merely that an interpretation of the situation is an ‘essentially contested concept.’ So too is an interpretation of Christianity. One major aspect of this conflict of interpretations is, of course, situational. Just as there is no one fundamental question to which all other questions must relate, so too with Christian systematic responses to that situation. There is no one response, no single journey of recognition and expression of the Christ event’s transformation of true situation and its transformation by the situation. Rather each theologian finds some elective affinity between some interpretation of the questions and responses in the situation and some interpretation of the questions and the responses of the Christian tradition and hence to the Christ event.” *The Analogical Imagination* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), p. 372.

of "profession," and of the bureaucratic institution take over. And, in a national public institution like the Air Force, the resulting theological vacuum invites the nationalistic character of the institution to assume an inappropriately large role.

Perhaps ecumenicity is in one sense a false friend of true religion. Insofar as it suppresses the true pluralist character of life today—of religion, of situation, of self—it contributes to a circumvention of the necessary process for genuine understanding and growth. Whenever "ecumenicity" becomes an effort to induce or impose a particular Christological viewpoint or paradigm favorable to certain ideas about church unity or other significant theological formulations, it ceases to be genuinely ecumenical. Tracy observes:

... the necessary dialectical counterpart to that self-identity (of the "classic" Christian theologies)—the necessary self-exposure to the full range of the Christian symbol system, to the full range of the theologies and spiritualities in the entire ecumenical Christian church, the full range of the fundamental questions in the situation—was too often disowned in the heady exhilaration occasioned by one particular individual or ecclesial focal meaning chosen to interpret the paradigmatic focal meaning for all Christians—the event of Jesus Christ.<sup>24</sup>

Apart from the focus on Christology, there are other hints that major religions, Christianity among them, can be viewed monolithically only by ignoring sample evidence to the contrary. With regard to worship, Hick asks:

... within Christianity itself, is there not a variety of overlapping mental images of God—for example, as stern judge and predestinating power, and as gracious and loving heavenly Father—so that different Christian groups, and even different Christian individuals, are worshipping the divine Being through their different images of him? And do not the glimpses ... of worship within the various religious traditions suggest that our Christian images overlap with many non-Christian images of God? <sup>25</sup>

With regard to ethical evaluation of major world religions, he observes.

Each (religion) has had its periods of spiritual flourishing, its great movements of renewal and reform, its times of cultural creativity and flowering, but also most have

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 425.

<sup>25</sup> Hick, p. 66.

had their fits of blind hatred and savage violence. Again, each has produced comparable saints and prophets and thinkers, but also comparable scoundrels and hypocrites and despots and oppressors. Thus the religious totalities are each so complex and various that it is very hard, if not impossible to make global moral judgments about them.<sup>26</sup>

While these views help to establish the reality of serious differences (theological and other) between and within religions (including Christianity), it is Christianity's special claim concerning Jesus, the Christ, that presently seems to create its most obvious theological problem with other religions. And, in a similar way, differing theological interpretations of the Christ event may also form the basis for theological problems of potentially equal gravity between alternative Christian groups which hold them.

In so far as America's churches are faithfully represented in the chaplaincy (which, as explained earlier, is to a very high degree), these theological difficulties are also represented. Yet, despite the presence of such serious theological divergences, special circumstances in the chaplaincy mitigate against their full recognition—potentially blocking necessary steps toward a healthier theological pluralism.

## **The Problems of Pluralism**

Genuine theological pluralism is present in the Air Force chaplaincy to the same degree as in America's churches. And that degree, historical and theological reflection has suggested, is most significant. But the institution of the chaplaincy creates a special environment for the pluralism. The context of the chaplains' ministries is an American public institution that holds him or her to a kind of "dual accountability"—administratively accountable to a secular "American" bureaucratic institution and religiously accountable to a particular religious group.

This arrangement sets up a fundamental conflict between the desire for order and unity on the one hand, and for genuine theological integrity on the other. Successful day-to-day functioning within the administrative model that has evolved in the chaplaincy depends on the constant mediation of the two. The institution implies that there ought to be a common denominator, a "common essence," around which the chaplains' work, or ministries, may be conducted. This "common essence" is to be articulated using nontheological language, or theological language so general that it implies next to nothing about the content of ministry ("to serve God and the Air Force community by being a visible reminder of the Holy, and creating and fostering an environment where persons are encouraged

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp. 54-55.

and assisted in their personal, moral, religious, and spiritual growth").<sup>27</sup> In the face of no perceived means for overcoming the theological difficulties inherent in the represented pluralism, "theology," as such, is relegated to the "back burner," and the languages of "profession," institution and nation fill the vacuum. The situation is further complicated by the inexact and misleading categorization inherent in the present "major faith group" distinctions. Since the predominance of theological pluralism has by definition been located in the Protestant major faith group, special difficulties emerge there. But even the Catholic and Jewish major faith groups are affected by the overall inhibition of theological focus in chaplains' work. As the professional paradigm and institutional concerns fill the vacuum left by theology's retreat, their absence affects the chaplaincy as a whole.

When it comes to the struggle to maintain the special theological character of the ministry, the chaplaincy is hardly alone.<sup>28</sup> When H. Richard Niebuhr, Daniel Day Williams and James Gustafson reported on their study of American theological education sponsored by the American Association of Theological Schools in 1956,<sup>29</sup> it was already clear that the ecclesial and theological identity of American ministers had already become a serious problem. When one references previous studies of American theological education,<sup>30</sup> it is possible to observe how between 1934 and 1956 the fundamental problem perceived in clergy education shifted from a concern for adequate modernization of curricula and teaching methods reflecting new knowledge and modern educational norms to a concern for disintegrate ministerial identity, for fierce fragmentation in the wake of decades of just the kind of adjustment called for earlier. Niebuhr's primary concern in 1956 was a developing type of American minister who had become overwhelmed, fragmented, and in a real sense dominated by new specialty disciplines of primarily a nontheological character.

For a long time now the Christian understanding of man has been obscured by theories of his nature built on other dogmas than that of the sovereignty of God and

<sup>27</sup> See f.n. 4.

<sup>28</sup> The following comments concerning the problem of theology in religious education in Niebuhr and Farley are a condensation of a more thorough treatment of the subject provided in a recent paper. See Paul Otterstein, "Religious Pluralism and the Problem of Theology in 20th Century American Theological Education," A.M.R.S. Paper, University of Chicago, March 1986, pp. 21-36.

<sup>29</sup> See H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Purpose of the Church and its Ministry* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1956).

<sup>30</sup> The two previous studies were conducted in 1934 and 1924. See William Adams Brown, *The Education of American Ministers, Vol. 1, Ministerial Education in America* (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1934) and Robert L. Kelly, *Theological Education in America* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1924).



constructed out of observations of his behavior made from other points of view than those of Christian faith. As the conception of nature to which man is always related has changed, churches and ministers have often succumbed to the temptation to substitute the needs of natural man (that is, of man as primarily related to nature) for the needs of theological man (that is, of man as primarily related to God.)<sup>31</sup>

The period during which these perceptions changed (1934-56) was the same period that neo-orthodoxy accompanied world changing events like the war. Niebuhr's central theological contribution—pointing out how the church can become over-identified with the world to the detriment of the clarity and integrity of its message and mission—is clearly visible in his call for the renewal of the essential theological character of ministerial education. But even as he issued the call, Niebuhr was increasingly aware that theological pluralism presents a problem for drawing theology to the center of theological education on a national level. There were simply too many different theologies. His response to this was a call for theological unity on the basis of his own brand of “common essence.” “Is not the result of all these debates and the content of the confessions or commandments of all these authorities this: that no substitute can be found for the definition of the goal of the Church as the *increase among men of the love of God and neighbor?*” (Emphasis his.)<sup>32</sup> His attitude is typical of the thinking of mainline Protestantism until very recently. “Denominationalism not the denominations; ecclesiasticism not the churches; Biblicism not the Bible; Christism not Jesus Christ; these represent the chief present perversions and confusions in Church and theology.”<sup>33</sup> As long as Niebuhr was confident he represented the dominant strain of Protestant theology, this call made good sense.

Another, more recent, treatment of the problem of the demise of theology in American clergy education is Edward Farley's *Theologia*.<sup>34</sup> Farley approaches the loss of theology in American clergy education like a detective. Tracing the “career” of theology in the Church, Farley discovers that its earlier place as *habitus* (a sapiential orientation of wisdom affecting personal understanding of God) and *discipline* (an organized way of knowing) was fundamentally modified by the Enlightenment and European Pietism.

With the Enlightenment and the modern university came the ideal of autonomous science, of scholarship, proceeding under no other canons than proper evidence. With

<sup>31</sup> Niebuhr, *Purpose*, p. 76.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>34</sup> Edward Farley, *Theologia* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983).

this came historical sense and historical-critical methods of interpretation. And these things in turn revolutionized the human and historical sciences into disciplines (sciences) in a new sense. A science was a cognitive enterprise working on some discrete region of objects under universal and critical principles.<sup>35</sup>

Pietism attempted to correct a scholastic-scientific approach to the study of theology in which rational demonstrations were more central than faith and personal formation. Central to pietism was the individual's progress in spiritual matters, hence the emphasis on prayer and discipline as the setting of theological study. However, the pietists also wanted to correct any notion of the minister as primarily a knower, a resident scholastic theologian, hence they very much stressed preparation and training for specific tasks of ministry. This introduces, in addition to personal formation, a second telos of the study of theology: training for ministerial activities.<sup>36</sup>

On the one hand, theology became a group of sciences governed by external criteria. On the other hand, ministerial education became largely defined by clerical tasks. *Habitus* and *discipline* were no where to be found. *Theologia* was lost.

Farley applies the term "clerical paradigm" to the circumstances arising from the definition of ministerial education by the perception of the practical demands of the clerical task. In a somewhat detailed analysis of the model Schleiermacher proposed for theological education in his 1811 *Brief Outline of Theological Study*, Farley isolates two motifs: "the essence of Christianity," and "the clerical paradigm." While Schleiermacher's "essence" holds his model together, the viability of the "essence" idea is increasingly challenged. In 1903 and 1913 Ernst Troeltsch successfully demonstrated the fundamental difficulties of the concept in *What Does 'Essence of Christianity' Mean?*<sup>37</sup> "The history of the fourfold pattern (Exegetical, Systematic, Historical, and Practical Theology)," writes Farley, "is a history of the decline of one of Schleiermacher's two motifs (the essence of Christianity) and the ascendancy of the other (the clerical paradigm)."<sup>38</sup>

Farley calls for the recovery of *Theologia* in theological education and the ministry of the churches. It is recoverable, he says,

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Ernst Troeltsch, "What Does 'Essence of Christianity' Mean?," in *Writings on Theology and Religion*, trans. & eds. Robert Morgan and Michael Pye (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1977), pp. 124-179.

<sup>38</sup> Farley, p. 114.

because it does not have to be recovered from historical structures, but is present in the moment. But, like Niebuhr, Farley realizes that theological pluralism poses new problems for the recovery of *Theologia*.

The recovery of *theologia* is not automatically assured by this distinction between its present reality and its absence from educational paradigms. *Theologia* existed in the initial stage of its career (classical Catholicism and Protestantism) in a conceptual and institutional framework of authority. That framework defined the nature and bases of theological understanding. This suggests that the relation between the conceptual world of classical Christian orthodoxy and *theologia* is one of interdependence. Accordingly, the demise of the former surely carries with it the discrediting of the latter. In the conceptual world of orthodoxy, theological understanding is faith's actual knowledge of God and the things of God. Monasticism and Protestant pietism viewed it as a knowledge whose final and highest instance was the beatific vision. Hence, *theology* was that personal-existential knowledge which was obtained in stages of spiritual or mystical discipline or through the means of grace. Scholasticism viewed *theologia* as a demonstrative knowledge (*scientia*), which included both a metatheological, rational demonstration of divine being and theological demonstrations of conclusions from posited authorities. Both lines saw theological understanding grounded in a *depositum* of revelation, the authoritative texts of Scripture and tradition. The question this raises is whether *theologia* can be disengaged from that framework, whether it can have a postorthodox form.<sup>39</sup>

Farley acknowledges that his "description is a general one. It is meant neither as definitive nor as a replacement for accounts of *theologia* which occur in the theologies of specific branches of Christendom."<sup>40</sup>

Niebuhr's and Farley's assessments of "the problem of theology" in theological education have significant implications for the chaplaincy. As each in his own way sought to draw theology closer to the center of the "larger" enterprise of the education of clergy (whether "larger" be taken as "American" "Christian," "Protestant," or any combination of the three), they found that theological pluralism presented a serious difficulty. While it may be possible to work toward renewed theological centrality within certain

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 164-165.

theological traditions, fundamental theological disagreements between traditions only serve to discourage the use of theological language in common endeavors. While the internal difficulties of the theological task, in the face of modern historical consciousness and the rush to “modernize” theological education and the ministry in America, may have provided the impetus for what Farley calls “the clerical paradigm,” the existence of genuine theological pluralism certainly encourages its continuation and provides a serious block to any effort to use theology meaningfully on a level other than the single theological tradition.

The structure of the Air Force chaplaincy is tailor-made not only to receive this problem from the reality of theological pluralism in American religion, but to *concentrate* it. It organizes representatives from the full spectrum of American religion into a single corps with an administration and dedicates them to a common task. While guaranteeing the right to theological integrity on one level (by regulation), it simplifies and confuses actual theological boundaries by its difficult-to-define “major faith group” designations. The resulting residual institutional pressure for conformity and incredibly complicated theological environment concentrate and exacerbate an already inherited tendency from the larger ecclesiastical community to avoid the conflicts and potential misunderstandings created by the use of overtly theological language.

The “professional” paradigm takes over. One speaks not of “ministries,” but of “programs.” Chaplains are caught in a competitive institutional environment where it often becomes necessary for them to be recognized as “professionals” within the military matrix, often in the very same sense that doctors, lawyers and pilots are perceived as professionals. Professional status is most easily recognized by the identification of various “skills.” The grab bag can seem bottomless: skills in education, skills in family ministries, skills in working with youth, public speaking skills, administrative skills, and so on. As Farley points out, theology itself, when referenced at all, is seen narrowly as a certain “skill” rather than anything approaching the *habitus* and *discipline* it once was. And as Niebuhr observed, the external criteria of multiple “skill” disciplines fundamentally shape the character of ministry rather than theological concerns. This entire scenario is no doubt to a degree descriptive of many denominational circumstances; but it is even more descriptive of the chaplaincy where the hurdle of theological pluralism presents its special barrier. The traditional response to the problem in the chaplaincy has been to relegate theology to a place of lesser importance—lesser in the sense that it is avoided as a subject on the “official” level where mutual planning and joint activity take place. Perhaps it is avoided in the same way that talk about sex is often avoided; it is regarded as “too important,” too personal, too

intimate, almost taboo. But as with other taboos, this kind of avoidance generally leads to ignorance and confusion, and certainly in this instance to a default to other foundations for what chaplains do. In this very practical sense, then, the basic integrity of the chaplaincy depends upon success in an endeavor where success has escaped all others: the ability to draw theology to the center of a genuinely theologically plural enterprise. As Martin Marty observed; "A minister may be a preacher, a counselor, a pastoral director, a priest—but in every instance he is to be first of all a theologian. He has no other reason for separate vocational existence."<sup>41</sup>

While the special circumstances of the chaplaincy concentrate the effects of the professional paradigm and thereby commend efforts to build a healthy theological pluralism for the sake of ministerial integrity, the special institutional character of the chaplain's "public" ministry also pressures the chaplaincy for a better understanding of contemporary theological pluralism. In *Analogical Imagination*, David Tracy asks the question, "Just whom does the theologian attempt to address in theological discourse?"<sup>42</sup> Does the chaplain address the members of his own faith group? Does the chaplain address a wider, but still religious community? Does the chaplain address an even wider community, a community given specific institutional form and composed of both (differing) religious and nonreligious members? The answers, of course, are yes, yes, and yes. Where Tracy speaks of society, academy and church as the three "publics" of theology, the chaplain may legitimately speak of secular institution, pluralist religious community, and denominational or sectarian group. The obvious tensions inherent in a ministry to these various "publics" seek ever deeper theological insight. In a remarkable passage, Tracy certainly speaks to chaplains.

Each theologian has, in fact, internalized to various degrees three publics, not one. Each has experienced the force of conflicting interpretations and conflicting plausibility structures in any attempt to make sense of reality. Most have experienced the evaporation and eventual collapse of any first naiveté toward any religious tradition, while sensing the presence of a second naiveté toward that same reality. Many have come to recognize the presence of real doubt in authentic contemporary faith. Many after an earlier exhilaration with "pure reason" when "bliss was it in that dawn to be alive but to be young were very heaven," to have experienced Enlightenment hopes for "pure reason" only to see them

<sup>41</sup> Martin E. Marty, "Cultural Education is Pre-Theological," in *The Making of Ministers*, eds. Keith R. Bridston and Dwight W. Culver (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1964), p. 132.

<sup>42</sup> Tracy, *Imagination*, p. 3.

become the contemporary bonds of a merely instrumental rationality. Many have witnessed the unmourned collapse of all forms of positivism, whether secularist or theological, as inadequate and eventually poisonous articulations of available meaning and truth. Some have recognized that, on the other side of our enjoyment of the enrichment of each by the pluralism present to all, lies the *fascinans et tremendum* reality of each one's seeming inability to become a single self any longer.

Some have recognized the complexity of the contemporary situation is a cause not for mourning or retreat, but for resoluteness and even, at times, for joy. For the pressures and questions of our situation will not go away by a refusal to face them.<sup>43</sup> . . . the theologian, like all others in a pluralist and denominational society, is involved, consciously or unconsciously, in an ongoing process of reflection upon one's voluntary commitment and loyalty to the Christian church and, ordinarily, to some particular church tradition. The theologian must thereby relate that commitment and its attendant responsibilities to one's other commitment and responsibilities to the wider society and to the academy and thereby to their plausibility structures.<sup>44</sup>

Working, day by day, as a functional member of a public institution; providing a witness as clergy representing a particular denomination or religious group with or along side clergy representing other denominations or religious groups; serving a group of people whose religious presuppositions, commitments, needs, and sensitivities stretch across the horizon; all this presses a chaplain into a constant struggle with the full range of pluralist forces. Institutional pluralism, cultural pluralism, religious pluralism, theological pluralism—each presenting a different set of criteria, a different set of choices.

When Hutcheson lists "problem areas" in religious pluralism in *The Churches and the Chaplaincy*, he includes evangelism, a clear sense of chaplain identity and purpose, the ability to speak out on issues of public and institutional ethics and morality, "homogenization," and problems involving nation.<sup>45</sup> To these could be added the framing and conduct of worship (especially for "Protestants"), objective evaluation of performance, the setting of staff priorities, and others. Because Air Force chaplains work as part of an hierarchical staff team, nearly every decision and every judgment has pluralist dimensions. Hutcheson's treatment of civil religion identifies

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>45</sup> Hutcheson, pp. 125-128.

two negative types (common denominator religion [Dewey] and “American way of life” religion [Herberg] and one positive type (God-centered dimension of national life [Bellah]). But this area deserves no “singled-out” treatment here since it, too, is subject to pluralist interpretation. Despite the obvious direct liaison between church and state accomplished by the unique arrangement of the military chaplaincy, despite the symbolism of uniform and the dual accountability it represents, the chaplain is different in *type* from his civilian counterpart only in the chaplain’s implied decision not to avoid the issue of nation or civil religion. The real difference, great as it is, is not so much in type but in concentration, magnification, and intensity.

The chaplain’s concentrated encounter with pluralism is as complex and multi-layered as that of his civilian counterpart. Yet despite the fact that the chaplain’s answer to Tracy’s question, “Just whom does (one) address in theological discourse?” is multiple, or perhaps because it is, the chaplain’s answer to that question must *begin* with “other chaplains.” It is in the peculiar design of the chaplaincy that if it (the institution of the chaplaincy itself) is to be what it is meant to be, then each chaplain must be whom he or she is meant to be. That is, the chaplain must be a willful, living (not static), representative of denomination or religious group engaged in genuine, overt theological conversation with peers. To deny the need for such conversation is to turn away from profound theological pluralism clearly present in American religion. To avoid it because of its difficulty is to default to the professional paradigm and remove the necessary foundation (theology) for addressing other concerns. The questions, of course, are: How can such a conversation be held? What is the direction to follow toward more genuine and wholesome theological pluralism?

## **Theological Pluralisms in the Air Force Chaplaincy**

The presence of theological pluralism in the chaplaincy can be ignored or inadequately addressed only at the high cost of eroding the theological basis of the chaplains’ ministries. What can be done?

There are at least four traditional reactions to theological pluralism.

- (1) All religions are untrue (they’re human projections).
- (2) Only one religion can be and is true (this has been the traditional viewpoint of most of the religions, certainly of Christianity).
- (3) All religions are true (seems to depend on all of them being finally the same).
- (4) One of the religions is true and others are partially true (invites an “inclusive” or “imperial” view of one dominant religion).

Given the range of denominations and religious groups represented in the chaplaincy, it is probably fair to say that all these viewpoints may be represented. To many observers, and perhaps to many chaplains, not one of them seems *totally* adequate or plausible.

One is free, in a sense, to ignore theological pluralism. While in the chaplaincy this may seem difficult, if not totally impractical, it is possible in the sense of simply choosing to have no, or at most minimal, formal theological exchanges with all or certain “others.” The right to take this course is protected. But if, in the light of previous discussion, one accepts the need to engage theological pluralism in some constructive fashion, where would one begin?

Many approaches to dealing with theological pluralism tend to presuppose forming some construct: the “an essence” theory. Since there is but one ultimate reality, underneath each religion there are common elements and a common purpose. In terms of world religion, mankind’s name for this reality, theistic and nontheistic, are varied (God, The One, Nature, The Many, etc.). The task is to discover or create the necessary linkages, recognitions, and reformulations that affirm the assumption. There are tremendous pressures at work in the world today that encourage this point of view, even make it seem necessary. There are “new” moods afoot today that tend to highlight the issue of theological pluralism—which is, after all, a very old reality. Langdon Gilkey points out that internationally there is a growing sense of cultural and religious *parity* (especially in the sense of a lessening of the West’s dominance) and of *relativity* in verbalized forms of discourse, rules and practices in religion (Vatican II is a symbol of this), coupled with an “emphasis on love as including toleration” as a definition of Christianity. These trends have helped contribute to a more radical sense of world relativity than we have known before.<sup>46</sup> They relativize previously protected theological items that even such adventuresome theologians as Carl Rahner and Paul Tillich insisted were not relative, such as the “Christ event.” This “*new relativity*” is felt not only in the Christian West, but in other cultures as well. Gilkey points out that even the traditional means of moving beyond the particularisms of religion to universality—Philosophy—is increasingly recognized as a culturally conditioned effort. This “new relativity” is emerging at a time when human problems make the affirmation that “the world is one,” or “the human race is one” seem more important than ever. There is a sense in which the effective accommodation of pluralism can be seen as one of the greatest human priorities. The case for using the affirmation of an “essence” in religion as the starting point for wrestling with theological pluralism is a compelling one.

The problem with approaching theological pluralism from a

<sup>46</sup> Langdon Gilkey, Lecture, “Religions and the Religious,” University of Chicago, 9 January 1986.



starting point that pursues an “essence” is that it doesn’t seem to work. If one starts with the notion of essence and, in a manner of speaking, works “backwards,” forming linkages, redefining terms and concepts, one is quite likely to come up against some particular, basic religious reality that one modifies only at the cost of “invalidating” the religion. This is precisely the case with Christology and Christianity.

As noted earlier, Hick and Knitter work on traditional Christology, attempting to show how modifications will remove Christianity’s sense of uniqueness and/or superiority. That Hick is motivated by an idea of “essence” seems clear.

We have to take note of the problem posed by the plurality of religious traditions. Having argued for the rationality of religious experience as genuine contact with transcendent reality, we are faced with the very diverse, and apparently conflicting, beliefs and practices of the various traditions. The basic hypothesis which suggests itself is that the diverse awarenesses of the same transcendent reality, which is perceived in characteristically different ways by different human mentalities, formed by and forming different cultural histories.<sup>47</sup>

Hick finds Christianity’s claim that Jesus is the metaphysical rather than “poetical” or metaphorical Son of God a doctrine in offense of this hypothesis. Selecting certain biblical and traditional evidences, he argues for the modification of the claim to remove the offense and make Christianity compatible with his philosophy of pluralism. But Gilkey points out <sup>48</sup> that while Hick wishes to emphasize a God of love who is related to all, he fails to account for his source of that information. That God is a universal, loving God is not an obvious, empirical fact. Where did Hick get his information? How can you, on one hand, take and use the universal declaration of Christianity while, on the other, not account for the particular claim that establishes the declaration? As soon as one knows that God is love through Christ, one is working with a powerful Christology. The example of a general principle cannot be the basis of that principle. Christianity, as the religion declaring the universal love of God, is fundamentally altered by a ripping out of its love-producing Christology, and nothing is put in its place. The theme of love is present in other religions, but is it so dominant that Christians know that it’s true? Christians are happy to pull it out and emphasize it, but is it really as strong? The doctrine of Christ is not really to tell

<sup>47</sup> Hick, p. 83.

<sup>48</sup> Langdon Gilkey, Lecture, “Religions and the Religious,” University of Chicago, 23 January 1986. The entire analysis of Hick’s argument and its implications for an approach to theological pluralism here is from Gilkey’s lecture.

people who Jesus is, but who God is (Athanasius). *The larger question being raised here by Gilkey is whether it is ever possible to separate a religion from its medium.* Each religion has its own saving ways to God. If you separate a religion from the basis of its claim, do you still have a viable religion? This is the difficult problem of theological pluralism.

The depth of the problem can be illustrated by Troeltsch's tremendously clarifying search for a meaning of "the essence of Christianity." Finding such a meaning beyond his—which is to say beyond anyone's—grasp, Troeltsch reflects: "This is admittedly a somewhat sober and realistic appraisal of the way things stand."<sup>49</sup> Knitter's interpretive comments on Troeltsch's struggle are helpful.

Historical consciousness, in other words, seems to imply a radical relativity of all cultures. Troeltsch, in his intellectual honesty, felt he had no choice but to assent to this historical consciousness and the cultural relativity that it demanded.

On the other hand, there is the natural human need for security, for reliable and certain truth, for a solid place on which to pitch one's tent, especially in matters of religious truth. This is precisely what Christianity, through its history, has claimed to offer! How can the certain, unchanging truth of the gospel be reconciled with historical consciousness and the relativity that it imposes? For if all is relative, then it seems that "anything goes." An anarchy of values results in which nothing can be asserted to be really right or wrong. This was the conflict that gripped Troeltsch's mind and heart. It was a personal problem, for he realized that there must be values and truth for which he could live and die.<sup>50</sup>

Troeltsch's solution was a form of *imminent transcendence, or transcendental subjectivity*. History is relative. Yet, in that relativity it experiences manifestations of the divine, the absolute, but cannot hold them in the sense of carrying the absolute along in history. As soon as the absolute enters history, it becomes relative.

There must be a contact point; there must be, at some point, a stopping point to relativity, or there's no point in talking about salvation. Whether one considers religion to be fundamentally a projection or fundamentally a response figures into the picture. If one considers religion to be a projection, then plurality is explained and all is relative. But if one considers religion to be a response, then there must be a point of contact somewhere. The window to the

<sup>49</sup> Troeltsch, p. 179.

<sup>50</sup> Knitter, p. 24.

ultimate must be open. There must be a “manifestation” of truth. The problem of theological pluralism is how to relate different manifestations of truth without closing the window.

Paul Knitter describes the “unitive pluralism” he promotes this way.

Unitive pluralism is a new understanding of religious unity and must not be confused with the old, rationalistic idea of “one world religion” . . . The new vision of religious unity is not syncretism, which boils away all the historical differences between religions in order to institutionalize their common core; nor is it imperialism, which believes that there is one religion that has the power of purifying and then absorbing all the others. Nor is it a form of lazy tolerance that calls upon all religions to recognize each other’s validity and then to ignore each other as they go their own self-satisfied ways. Rather, unitive pluralism is a unity in which each religion, although losing some of its individualism (its separate egos), will intensify its personality (its self-awareness through relationship). Each religion will retain its own uniqueness, but this uniqueness will develop and take on new depths by relating to other religions in mutual dependence.<sup>51</sup>

And then Knitter asks, “Again, for the moment, we find ourselves asking whether this is but a fanciful dream?”<sup>52</sup> As he proceeds to propose a Christological solution along lines similar to Hick (moving from a “Christocentric” to a “theocentric” model) that is subject to many of the same weaknesses, it would seem that Knitter’s question would have to be answered in the affirmative. As Tracy suggests, the Knitter/Hick approach is “doubtful.” To answer the interreligious problem by shifting Christology to a theocentric model is only to “postpone the problem.”<sup>53</sup>

Another significant “category” in theological pluralism that is important to consider when one wishes to bring together theologies under the assumption that they are essentially the same (or at least compatible) is the appearance of what Gilkey refers to as the intolerable.<sup>54</sup> The intolerable, a category of prejudice, is a function of norms and cannot be escaped. What makes something tolerable or intolerable? The religious can issue forth in the intolerable. Examples in our century might include the horrors of Nazi Germany’s death

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> David Tracy, Lecture, “Religions and the Religious,” University of Chicago, 28 January, 1986.

<sup>54</sup> Langdon Gilkey, Lecture, “Religions and the Religious,” University of Chicago, 16 January 1986.

camps, or even the fanaticism of a Khomeini. Some might consider the radical religious right in the United States to be intolerable. Americans tend to focus not on thoughts or beliefs with reference to issues of tolerance; finally, its actions that are intolerable. Wrong religion, wrong faith, wrong ideology can be intolerable when it issues forth in destructive action. Issues of intolerability tend to require a stand of some sort. Examples include war and slavery. Everyone must stand somewhere.

Standing for justice means that the issue of tolerance must arise at some point. Ultimate values come into play. The point here, again, is that it is not possible to be merely relative and be human. To be human requires a "commitment" to something. And "commitment," we remember, is reminiscent of the definition given to religion by such as Kierkegaard and Tillich. It's easy to fall prey to the romantic notion of the similarity of religions. But plurality implies both relativity and some kind of relation to the absolute. Theological pluralism must account for the existence of the intolerable—for the radical, oppositional circumstances that may arise in religion. One popular analogy heard from time to time in the chaplaincy is that some view theological pluralism in terms of a "melting pot," while others favor the "salad bowl." We must allow for a deeper pluralism than either of these. In keeping with the analogy, we must allow for the existence of completely different salads. For example, one "Christian" viewpoint may find another "Christian" viewpoint, such as the one recently articulated by certain American conservative evangelical leaders that assassination of Muammar Khadafy is justified on the principle of self defense, wholly "intolerable." Such circumstances can place Christians on opposite sides of a fundamental issue of justice or conscience; no choice is left but to oppose one another.

These approaches to theological pluralism that begin with an assumption of a common or similar "essence" present serious difficulties and don't solve basic problems. Is there another way? Can we, as Tracy suggests, find a way to formulate the question of pluralism that would give new answers? <sup>55</sup> The most promising "formulation of the question" of theological pluralism seems to lie in the direction of a dialectical understanding of dialogue that conceives of itself as a form of "praxis."

Dialectical thinking is hardly new to theology. Since Hegel's synthesis, dialectical thinking has influenced several modern theologians and process thinkers. Dialectical thinking involves the holding of perceived opposites in tension: the "unity of the whole and part, the infinite and the finite, the universal and the particular." <sup>56</sup> The

<sup>55</sup> David Tracy, Lecture, "Religions and the Religious," University of Chicago, 28 January 1986.

<sup>56</sup> Gilkey, Lecture, "Religions and the Religious," University of Chicago, 30

concept of polarity is key to dialectical thinking. Polarity refers to two apparent opposites that upon reflection seem to depend on one another; the one is necessary to the other. Classic examples are the “plus” and “minus” of magnetic fields, or even men and women. It is sometimes observed that the strongest communities are made up of bonds between strong, autonomous individuals; each grows in strength as the other grows. Applied to the circumstance of theological pluralism, however, this type of thinking is not without its problems. It can imply that each (theological) formulation is rescued from its relativity by being given status only in relation to its opposite. Gilkey points out that theologians and philosophers who have used this method have each required a “mediator” of some sort at the point of their special synthesis to make sense of their proposals, to lift them out of their relativity: Hegel required the rational process, Kierkegaard the “absolute paradox” (Christ), Whitehead required a permanent structure projected out in metaphysical categories and called God, Dewey required the scientific method, Tillich required the “appearance of the new being.”<sup>57</sup> The presence of a mediator in each instance raises again the issue of the source of the absolute as it appears in the realm of relativity. Gilkey asks if the “merely historical” is a possible key for such syntheses. He points out that “Jesus cannot be divine because he was a very, very, very good man. It’s a completely different category.”<sup>58</sup> So the strength of the dialectical method is not that it provides a universally accessible means to the absolute for mankind. Rather, its strength lies in its potential for a much more realistic assessment of the circumstance of theological pluralism.

While the tone of H. Richard Niebuhr’s 1956 assessment of the “purpose of the Church and its ministry” revealed an overly optimistic sense of converging American and Protestant theology, his use of “polar” language lends a solid feel to his definition of the Church:

We need to define Church further by use of the polar terms “community” and “institution.” . . . We must deal . . . with certain other polarities in the church’s existence. Among these are the complementary yet anti-theetical characteristics of unity and plurality, of locality and universality, of Protestant and Catholic.<sup>59</sup>

And in his 1963 essay *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions*, Tillich observed that “we can point to a decisive predominance” in Christianity’s relationship with other religions of

January 1986.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Niebuhr, *Purpose*, pp. 21 & 23.

“a dialectical union of acceptance and rejection, with all the tensions, uncertainties, and changes which such dialectics implies.” And, “One thing should have become clear. The relation is profoundly dialectical, and that is not a weakness, but the greatness of Christianity . . .”<sup>60</sup> Tillich was not speaking to the requirements of our situation vis-a-vis theological pluralism, but his observation serves to underline the appropriateness of a dialectical framework as a beginning for Christianity’s dialogue with other religions (or with its own “internal religions”).

A “polar” or dialectical starting point for approaching theological pluralism seems helpful for a number of reasons. No single tradition can define the “whole truth.” Each tradition is only part of the whole. Each may find that it can only be itself in relationship to the other. Each tradition seeks in its relationships with others to point translucently beyond itself to the ultimate reality. There is a shift in emphasis from the “ego” to an “ultimate reality” to find meaning between the self and reality. Grace means (or can mean) that “ultimate reality” can be trusted. There may be families of religions, but there is no essence common to all. Rather than searching for an “essence,” such dialogue presupposes the illumination of the idea that God is revealed in only one way. In the move from self-centeredness to other-centeredness that the polar situation calls for, there is a sense that contrast—rather than simply conflict—becomes possible.

Perhaps most significantly, the emphasis in participation shifts emphatically from a tendency to minimize or apologize for one’s own tradition and views to the opposite. The dialectical model requires that each tradition be nothing less than its radical self in order for the whole model to be real and effective. To become less than one’s genuine self is to threaten the others’ identities. If a Buddhist, in a Christian-Buddhist dialogue, is not be genuinely Buddhist, the dialogue suffers. The same is true, obviously, with a conservative evangelical—liberal Christian dialogue.

This does not mean, however, that one is preoccupied with one’s own point of view. One seeks to avoid argument (although that may be necessary at points) and to move to conversation, which may be defined as that situation in dialogue where the question under consideration takes over the exchange. One must be prepared to genuinely encounter the “other,” even, as Tracy says, the “terrifying other;” that is, to open one’s self to “otherness” that may be able to unlock what is truly “terrifying” in your own existence. Dialogue as conceived in a dialectical model is not for the insecure and the faint hearted. If one is to be comfortable with “real” dialogue, one must possess a significant sense of security in one’s own theological understandings—sufficiently so as to be willing to risk them in honest

<sup>60</sup> Tillich, *Encounter*, pp. 30 & 51.

pursuit of a common question. To “risk them” does not mean to subject them to any third party evaluation in a win/lose scenario, but to risk testing one’s own understandings and formulations in honest reflection.

One of the “new” circumstances affecting contemporary theological dialogue in world religions is what Gilkey calls rough parity.<sup>61</sup> Dialogue does not work well when the partners to the dialogue do not have a sense of full participation. Gilkey observes that the historical dominance of the West in world affairs has inhibited world religious parity. Since religion is closely interwoven with culture, the sense that the long growth of the West’s dominance has ended and perhaps reversed has created a new climate for religious interaction. Rough parity refers not so much to “equality” as to a felt sense of full adequacy. The same kind of dynamic may have very significant implications for theological dialogue in American Christianity and, by further implication, the Air Force chaplaincy.

Following the modernists’ and liberals’ “defeat” of the fundamentalists in the 1920s, the conservative forces spent decades in disorganization and “underground” status. The re-emergence of the conservative evangelicals today may signal the possibility for the renewal of genuine theological dialogue. Indeed, their renewed interest in cultural relevance and public order has renewed the dialogue. For a long time the liberals and mainliners appeared to have the field to themselves. Now that the conservative—evangelicals have clearly returned, perhaps rough parity has been established.

Theological dialogue in a dialectical, or “polar,” framework is perhaps most realistically understood and potentially helpful when it conceives of itself as “praxis”. The Greek word refers to “action,” “deed,” “enterprise,” and “transaction.” It conveys the idea that this form of dialogue is not only talk (although it is that, too), but is the whole set of connected and practical interactions of the theologies. The actual, ongoing, interactional enterprise of the theologies constitutes the “dialogue.” Gilkey suggests that “to be in dialogue is a form of practicing a contradiction.”<sup>62</sup> Of importance here is Tracy’s concern that dialogue easily becomes too caught up in an approach that draws from a narrowing process of “scientism:” all conversation is reduced to argument, all topical arguments are reduced to formal arguments, all appeals to universal truth are replaced with restrictions to absolute rationality.<sup>63</sup> Tracy would prefer a more open approach to dialogue. The grip of narrow

<sup>61</sup> Gilkey, Lecture, “Religions and the Religious,” University of Chicago, 9 January 1986.

<sup>62</sup> Gilkey, Lecture, “Religions and the Religious,” University of Chicago, 16 January 1986.

<sup>63</sup> Tracy, Lecture, “Religions and the Religious,” University of Chicago, 21 January 1986.

rationalism should be broken to make way for new observations and events. An example of this may be seen in contemporary Jewish-Christian dialogue, where the (relatively) recent event of the Holocaust provides a "new" event of such significance (a rupture, or *tremendum*) that it can alter theological understanding. The kind of dialogue being proposed here includes the following elements:

- Privilege or dominance is denied to any one tradition as, indeed, no one tradition can point to the whole truth (radical transcendence helps here—God actually transcends all symbols).
- Each tradition seeks to be genuinely itself (indeed, the dialogue can proceed only if they are and remain truly themselves).
- Real questions of concern are posed from the full context of the interaction of the theologies represented in an atmosphere of openness where "the question" is allowed to take over and guide discussion.
- There is an openness to fresh "manifestations of truth," which are validated by their recognition as they occur in the course of conversation.

A stage has been set for the working of the "analogical imagination." Tracy writes:

We understand one another, if at all, only through analogies. Each recognizes that any attempt to reduce the authentic otherness of another's focus to one's own with our common habits of domination only seems to destroy us all, only increases the leveling power of the all-too-common denominators making no one at home. Conflict is our actuality. Conversation is our hope.<sup>64</sup>

And Gilkey writes:

Creative relations between religious faiths are more than those characterized simply by the aim at conversion and the negative judgment of error or worse. They involve genuine dialogue, that is, a two-way dialogue to which each contributes, in which each learns, and from the results of which each grows.<sup>65</sup>

Given this general outline of direction for dialogue in theological pluralism, it is not surprising to note that both Tracy and Gilkey feel that, in terms of Christianity, future reformulations or reworkings of doctrinal understanding in the light of theological pluralism lie in the direction of the Holy Spirit, not Christology.

In the wake of this assessment, then, what can be suggested to

<sup>64</sup> Tracy, *Analogical Imagination*, p. 363.

<sup>65</sup> Gilkey, "Toward a Redefinition of Universal Salvation in Christ," in *Society and the Sacred* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), p. 158.



the chaplaincy as a helpful response to its circumstance of theological pluralism? As has been pointed out, the circumstance can be ignored only at considerable cost to the chaplaincy's identity and character. The body of the discussion in this section suggests, I think, that if there is not a clear direction in which the chaplaincy can actually begin to travel, there is, at least, a direction that it can prudently turn and face. That direction is toward formal, purposeful, theological dialogue of the dialectical genre outlined. Helpful encounter within the chaplaincy's theologically pluralist world would likely be set sharply back by any serious or formal accommodation of approaches seeking an "essence" or suggesting that different theologies reexamine the validity of formulations troublesome to any unitive theory. That such an approach cannot meet with theological success is probable. That it cannot meet with practical success is certain. But genuine theological dialogue is a possibility for the chaplaincy. Indeed, it is a necessity.

The chaplaincy is nearly an ideal setting for the praxis of theological dialogue in a dialectical framework. It has many of the key elements institutionalized: rough parity, common commitment and endeavor, and protected integrity of theological position. (Admittedly, each of these "elements" would bear checking out since institutionalization sometimes produces qualities more formal than real.) The chaplaincy's major failing in its encounter with theological pluralism is its tendency to default to the professional paradigm, and its lack of aggressiveness in keeping its theological self-awareness and theological agenda at a high level or priority. There is a need to move from praxis to formal definitions and formal dialogue so that the chaplaincy's pluralism might be more explicitly theological pluralism, and the language of theology might enjoy greater freedom and use as chaplains carry out their service.

Several years ago the Office of the Air Force Chief of Chaplains began a program called "Ministry to Chaplains." Utilizing the resources of Fr. Vince Dwyer and the Institute for Human Development at the Catholic University of America, and drawing from the traditions of the spiritual fathers as well as from social sciences, the program sought to help chaplains discover and develop spiritual resources for mutual regard and support across the boundaries of theological traditions. One of the surprising benefits of the program was a new appreciation for theological truth that penetrated traditional boundaries. Perhaps the time has come when a program directed toward the institution of more formal theological dialogue can be helpfully developed and implemented. Such a program would probably need to clearly circumscribe its goals in terms of mutual theological awareness and understanding in chaplaincy related matters and be implemented at all "levels" and "stations" in the chaplaincy in order to be effective. But if not this particular response, then some

other affirmative step is advised.

The circumstance of theological pluralism and the problems it brings to the chaplaincy call for active—and urgent—searching for helpful directions. Theological pluralism has always been a way of life in the chaplaincy, and now it is clearly the most significant reality for the future of the chaplaincy.

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# On Prayers In Jesus' Name

**Bertram Gilbert**

In all three of the military chaplaincies there has been recently a great deal of discussion and some misunderstanding on the subject of "Praying in the Name of Jesus." The discussion has been generated by a somewhat belated awareness that ours is a pluralistic society. The misunderstanding has been caused by persons who, while meaning to emphasize sensitivity, have given the impression that it is not only impolite but even forbidden to use the Christian messiah's name as closure to public intercession. (This observation is not meant as a criticism of Rabbi Resnicoff's article, *Military Chaplains' Review*, Winter, 1987. His article is a thoughtful analysis and helpful for stimulating discussion on this subject.)

No one may or should tell a chaplain how to pray. Such an order would be as insulting as telling a physician how to prescribe a medication or a chef how to cook; it would be an invasion of a province so personal and sacral as to allow no excuse. Many denominational endorsers, including this one, would fight, even to the point of threatening the chaplaincy itself for a chaplain's right to say "Jesus" in every sentence of a prayer if that is what the chaplain thought to be pleasing to God.

Apart from this basic right to pray as conscience leads, there are several other important factors which need to be considered. Although I do not believe there can be a universally satisfying solution to the problem, I am convinced that more is called for than simply taking a stand.

Today there is surely a higher sensitivity to the sort of public usage which seems to ignore the allegiances of those attending the event. In recent days many of us have been accused of sexism and

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Chaplain (COL) Bertram Gilbert, USA, Ret., is Assistant Executive Director, Division of Service to Military Personnel, Lutheran Council of the U.S.A. Before taking this position, Chaplain Gilbert served as a military chaplain in both the Navy and Army.

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racism in our public utterances. We are also hearing that we are “hung up” on faith-group parochialism. It doesn’t seem to matter now that in the past our hearts were “in the right place,” or that we always took the side of females, Blacks, and Hispanics. Our present words seem to speak louder than those past actions to those present who take issue with our choice of words. Today, in the matter of faith distinctions, it will not suffice simply to deny guilt or claim that our way of praying is not intended to denigrate other faiths or to suggest superiority. Regardless of our defense for this choosing of words, it will be possible and even legitimate for someone to claim, “Your prayer offended me.”

Some of us have not kept up with the times. Too many of us are still coasting along as though we were still in the era of Protestant, Christian or even religious proprietorship of the culture. The norms and acceptable practices of yesterday may no longer be normal or practical today.

Practically speaking, are prayers always an appropriate, let alone helpful, part of every public event? Sometimes I feel that prayers are on the program because the program chairperson does not know how to start or conclude a public occasion without an invocation and a benediction. My term for before-and-after public prayer is “Book Ending,” and because it is so easily trite, I have often talked organizers into having only one such supplicatory portion and that at some point other than the start or finish. Like religious broadcasting with its radio and TV programs at sunrise and midnight, starting and ending prayers on programs can appear to be out of date, perfunctory hat-tipping to tradition. One could argue that any exposure to religious sentiments is better than none. While that sounds plausible, there may be real questions whether the people gathered for many public events want, expect, or are more than palled by the public praying that goes on.

Once Chaplain John DeVeaux—the senior John DeVeaux who was the first Black “full-colonel” chaplain in the Army—told the organizer of the dedication of a new sewage disposal plant in Baumholder, West Germany, “Oh, no, no, no, colonel. No. No. No. Our chaplains are much too busy for that.”

Should every chaplain be tasked with prayers at public ceremonies? Every chaplain is not required to perform infant baptisms, Catholic weddings, Protestant confirmations or to represent the command at the anniversary celebration of the local planned parenthood league. If a chaplain feels that he or she cannot lead the members of a particular group in prayer, declining the invitation may be entirely in order. If the chaplain believes that he or she cannot involve those who will be present and without offense, the option should be to send regrets. This absence should bring no criticism and no lower performance ratings. This is one of those areas where senior

chaplains help or hurt the chaplaincy depending on their protection and encouragement of chaplain integrity.

In passing, I find it interesting, telling and sad that in all the recent discussion of religious rights for those in the armed services—even to include Congressional deliberations—there has been no consideration of clergy rights.

Organizers of public occasions could well be encouraged to invite the participation of several clergy persons from various faith groups. With them on the same program, people from the audience could make their vocal petitions and responses within the context of prayer. If there are not enough clergy available to cover the probable religious leanings of all those present, lay persons could be asked to participate and to pray publicly.

I suspect that some chaplains, in an effort to defend their turf, will resist the idea of lay participation. For that and more important reasons the decision of the chaplain to be the only prayer leader at a public event becomes a test of responsibility. To respond well to that testing requires the use of honest, sensitivity-raising imagination.

This means that the chaplain must project the event in his or her imagination to ask what words will be helpful, soul enriching, inspiring, and what words will cause all the hearers present, no matter their ecclesiastical identity, to say “Amen.” To put it negatively, which words or phrases will elicit a “Now you blew it, chaplain.” Will the Roman Catholic listener be uncomfortable when the Protestant chaplains prays for the Holy Father or asks Mary’s intercession? Will the Roman Catholic be disturbed if the rabbi insists on starting and ending the prayer in Hebrew? And wouldn’t the Jewish believer, the Roman Catholic and some Reformed Christians be turned off by a prayer with folksy, down-home phraseology? What will the chaplain who honestly imagines the scene prepare to say in prayer? What will the chaplains say for others as they would have others say for them?

I wonder if the New Testament really commands us to pray in Jesus’ name. The primary text supporting this practice is *John* 14:13-14 which some see as a promise and others as an imperative. Still others would suggest that regardless of the hermeneutics, prayer in Jesus’ name is the natural, savior crediting expression of a person who simply and devoutly believes that there is one God and one mediator between God and people, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are told by Jesus himself to pray in the Father’s name and that paternal nomenclature usually causes no consternation. (This name, too, may one day become a problem as awareness in regard to gender usage increases. Over a hundred years ago Mary Baker Eddy was calling the deity “Father-Mother God.” But even that procreative bisexual designation may not be acceptable in the future.) Even “Holy Spirit of God” usually presents no difficulty. It is the use of

the name of the second person in the Christian trinity which raises criticism because his deity or mediatorship (as He expected) is not universally accepted.

Some of us have found it possible to accept Jesus' promise of answered prayer as we prayed using some of his other names. To illustrate this point I composed a little exercise which uses at least seven such names.

J ustice is thy name, O Holy One.

E ternal is thy grace.

S alvation comes alone from thee.

U nending are the praises we should sing.

S o hear us, thou who are the word, the truth, the  
light of this our world. Be bread of life to us. Be  
wonderful counselor in our times of trial and lead us  
to that place of which you are prince. Amen.

Of course, I do not recommend this as a real prayer. Its conglomerate nature disqualifies it as such. This is true because the naming, and the name one uses in a prayer, are nearly the essence of the petition, the praise, or the plaint. As such, as essential, the name or names will spring from the heart with poetic or passionate thrust and with exposing precision. It is this sort of heartfelt, meaning-filled naming that Walter Wangerin, Jr., says qualifies both God and the speaker. (*Christian Century*, July 1-8, 1987, p. 593.) And if that is so, we must think twice and tread carefully before we ask prayer leaders to change the names they choose to use.

Sometimes it happens that the call to be sensitive and the attempt to edit prayers fails to honor the feelings of those who expect to hear certain formulas, specific scriptural allusions and in the case in point, hallowed names. Such faithful ones may feel sincerely that a chaplain is denaturing a prayer in order to gain approval. They may also suspect that the chaplain has in a sense denied fealty to his or her master, church or faith group. It is not a consideration which may be regarded lightly. Religion is word and name centered. On the occasion of public prayer there may well be those present who will know the chaplain's prayer style from worship services and therefore misunderstand his or her role as prayer leader for all those gathered at a public event.

The extent to which the chaplain is known, respected, and loved by those gathered in the groups where public prayer is being offered will in some sense determine its content. Being sent to say an invocation at a graduation of class members with whom the chaplain has had no contact will be different from saying a prayer at a memorial service for a member of his or her faith group, squadron or battalion. In the latter case, familiarity—in its root meaning—will breed consent.



breed consent.

Finally, and partially with tongue-in-cheek, let me comment on what from the Christian believer's point of view is the most common offense—the vulgar use of the name of Jesus Christ. The name is so commonly used to emphasize, to damn, or to simply color the language that we might worry that so few people seem to be offended. We Christians should like to make a bargain with those who are offended by the use of the name Jesus in prayer. We will honor your feelings to the extent that you help us stop the use of the name of Jesus in vain.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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### The Holiness Of God

*R. C. Sproul*

*Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1985, cloth \$10.95*

Dr. R. C. Sproul is professor of systematic theology and apologetics at Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi. He is a respected theologian, popular teacher, and president of Ligonier Ministries.

“The failure of modern evangelicalism is the failure to understand the holiness of god,” says Dr. Sproul in the conclusion of his book. The statement articulates the underlying theme of the whole work. The book is not a polemical, pedantic, theological tome, but very readable and well-paced. The expressed purpose of the book is to develop in the reader a new awareness of our dependence on God’s mercy and a renewed appreciation for the meaning of God’s holiness in our lives.

If you are looking for a book on “How to Be Holy” or “Seven Steps to a Holy Life,” this is not the book for you. Holiness, according to Sproul, is not the result of a step-by-step process, but the result of our appreciation of the nature and majesty of God.

Like Bonhoeffer who called it “cheap grace,” Sproul attacks the notion that God requires nothing from the one who is a Christian. Using Luther as an example, Sproul shows that God requires radical non-conformity of those who trust Him. This non-conformity is not superficial righteousness. It is transformation—a rigorous pursuit of the Kingdom of God in one’s life and in the world. “True transformation comes by gaining a new understanding of God, man, and the world,” says Sproul.

Sproul deals with the “hard” facts of God’s holiness—the accounts of Sodom and Gomorrah, Nadab and Abihu, and Uzzah. He places these events in the context of God’s holiness and man’s rebellion against that holiness. This juxtaposition stimulates thinking.

This is not an easy book. It can be quickly read, but it demands that the reader reflect and think. This reviewer thinks that *The Holiness of God* is for all who take Christianity seriously.

God calls His people to Holiness, "Be ye holy as I am holy." This book assists in the pursuit of the goal. "Holy, holy, holy . . ."

Chaplain (CPT) Thomas E. Troxell  
ARNG

## **The Nurturing Father**

*Kyle D. Pruett*

*Warner Books, Inc., New York, 1987, \$17.05, 322 pages.*

Kyle Dean Pruett, M.D., is a clinical professor of psychiatry at the Yale University Child Study Center. A pioneering researcher in the area of paternal care-giving and its effects on children, Dr. Pruett is himself a nurturing father.

With real, identifiable portraits of fathers as nurturing and caring fathers, Dr. Pruett puts our society's false assumptions and generalizations regarding fatherhood to the test. The first part of the book dispels some of the false notions about fatherhood which pervade modern American society. The book is a book of awakenings and shows how important psychological and developmental factors, such as self-esteem, sexual identity, cognitive growth, curiosity and social relatedness are all positively influenced by a nurturing father.

Several chapters are given to describing fathers of families who became the primary nurturers when their children were born, and shows them to be normal, traditional people in every other respect. Chapters 5 through 10 describe three specific families with fathers as primary nurturers, examining results immediately after the birth of the children, and at ages 4 and 6. The remaining chapters examine gender roles that hide the complete expression of the self, the possible threat and guilt that mothers might feel when sharing the nurturing role, divorce and the nurturing father, and how society's feelings might be changed to allow for more nurturing fathers who would not negate the role of the mother.

One interesting finding asserts that a man who is involved in the physical care of his child before the age of three will be less likely in later years to be sexually abusive of the child or other children. In the light of the increasing sexual abuse of children, the humanization of both father and child that allows them to relate to each other openly, easily, and honestly is most important to the decrease of the sick exploitation that we find prevalent in today's society.

The book calls us to develop as complete people, encourages

each individual to draw from his or her unique repertoire of potential behaviors, and disallows our tendency to characterize particular behavioral patterns as male or female. The need for divorced fathers to be healthily involved in their children's lives is also of great significance. The positive power of the father's presence cannot be overemphasized.

*The Nurturing Father* is a very good book for couples thinking carefully about who should or who wants to be the primary nurturer of their children. It concludes that the father might well be the principle nurturer and with very good results. Beyond this usefulness, however, it is a book for anyone wishing to break out of traditional and inhibiting gender roles which disallow who we really are inside.

*The Nurturing Father* is a balanced book that reduces the threat of the tide of changing sexual roles in contemporary society and shows that God has created us to be free to experience and to express all that we are.

Chaplain (MAJ) Paul Vicalvi  
USA

## **On Moral Medicine: Theological Perspectives In Medical Ethics**

*Stephen Lammers and Allen Verhey, eds.*

*William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987, Softcover, \$24.95, 657 pages.*

Stephen Lammers is professor of religion at Lafayette College, Easton, Pennsylvania. The author of numerous articles and book reviews, he has received a National Endowment for the Humanities Award for his work in bioethics.

Allen Verhey is professor of religion at Hope College, Holland, Michigan. An ordained Protestant minister, he is the author of *The Great Reversal: Ethics and the New Testament* and of many articles and book reviews.

This anthology is one of the most timely resources currently available to people concerned about the serious and perplexing issues emerging in the field of medical ethics. The editors have included a very broad range of essays written by theologians, medical doctors, ethicists, and others who have pondered one aspect or another of this vast and dynamic subject.

The editors place the seriousness of this volume in the context of a revolution in which we human beings are, "both the stakes and the players." This collection of essays should be viewed as statements of meaning, being, and responsibility, as well as an opportunity to raise serious and troublesome questions.

Topics are arranged under three main headings and include: Perspectives on Religion and Medicine, (16 entries); Concepts in religions and Medicine, (33 entries); and Issues in Medical Ethics, (54 entries). The contributors represent a wide range of thought, theology, and opinion, thus providing the reader with a rich variety of thought provoking material. Several scripture references are included for reflection and consideration.

There are enormous resources available in this book to the pastor or lay person who is willing to engage the scientific community in the battle for the dignity and worth of the human being. For those who would assist the medical practitioner in dealing with the complex ethical questions raised by the applications of a highly technical age, this book will be welcomed, helpful, and just in time.

Chaplain (LTC) Richard Adams  
USA

## **Growing Deep In The Christian Life**

*Charles R. Swindoll*

*Multnomah Press, 1986, Hardcover, 433 pages.*

The Rev. Charles R. (Chuck) Swindoll is a popular radio speaker and writer. He is pastor of the First Evangelical Free Church, Fullerton, California.

*Growing Deep In The Christian Faith* is a book of systematic theology written in non-theological terms. Although the book reads easily, it is provocative and presents biblical truths in a very entertaining and engaging fashion.

The author says in the introduction that the book is written to reach “the truck driver, the athlete, the waitress, the high school student, the person in the military service, the homemaker who has a house full of kids at her feet, the business person whose world is practical, earthy, tough, and relentless . . . and a hundred other “types” who have the brains to absorb biblical truth, but lack the time and patience to look up every sixth or seventh word in a dictionary.”

Swindoll’s insights are practical and refreshing. The clarity of thought and the simplicity of presentation, make his ideas easily understood by someone unfamiliar with biblical doctrine. Incidentally there is a wealth of illustrative material for the preacher or teacher seeking to communicate biblical truths.

I found the book to be useful, and I recommend it easily to both clergy and lay person because of its simplicity and orthodox

approach to scripture.

Chaplain (CPT) Thomas C. Condry  
USA

## **Pastoral Companionship: Ministry With Seriously Ill Persons And Their Families**

*Gerald J. Calhoun*

*Paulist Press, 1986, Softcover, 173 pages, \$8.95.*

Gerald J. Calhoun is a Jesuit priest who serves in Boston, Massachusetts, where he is Director of Novices for the New England Province of the Society of Jesus. After receiving his Doctor of Ministry in Pastoral Counseling in 1975, he was director of Pastoral Care at Youville Hospital, Cambridge, Massachusetts. While in that position, Father Calhoun organized and coordinated a training program for parishioners in lay ministry, supervised numerous divinity students as interns caring for seriously ill patients, and lectured extensively on pastoral care of the sick and dying.

*Pastoral Companionship* is a relevant resource for those ministering to the seriously ill and their families. The book grew out of the author's daily interpersonal contact and experiences at Youville Hospital in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It is a "source book," providing an introduction to significant issues rather than definitive or exhaustive treatments.

The primary purpose of the book is to focus on professional Christian ministry among the seriously ill and their families as a specialized type of pastoral care. Gerald J. Calhoun maintains that Jesus Christ—and the mystery of His suffering, death, and resurrection—provides a powerful healing influence through his servants within the context of "companionship."

Defining ministry to the seriously ill as "companionship in faith in the name of the Lord," the author shows how this unique ministry impacts on the central experiences (prayer life, decision making, and dying) of the seriously ill. Recognizing the limitations imposed by personnel shortages, Calhoun proposed and explores viable opportunities for ministry which include appropriate advocacy, a structured training program for lay ministry in parish settings, and the pastoral supervision of divinity and ministerial students. With a unique sensitivity to the needs of the seriously ill, Calhoun challenges the reader to experience new dimensions of God's gifts of healing and peace, strength and purpose.

*Pastoral Companionship* offers detailed accounts based on personal experiences which lovingly record the impact of serious illness on individual and family relationships. In addition to its focus on professional ministry among the seriously ill, the book might also

assist families and friends who share the burden of serious illness to value their own "companionship" with loved ones and help them to recognize experiences which lead to acceptance and peace with living and with dying.

While the book is written from the perspective and faith of a Roman Catholic priest, it will certainly appeal to all involved in this special ministry. With his challenge to relate openly, honestly, constructively and compassionately with the seriously ill, Calhoun offers much help to those who minister among those who suffer and die.

Chaplain (MAJ) Warren H. Withrow  
USA

## **Christians Must Choose: The Lure Of Culture And The Command Of Christ**

*Jan G. Linn*

*CBP Press, St. Louis, 1985, Softcover, \$7.95, 104 pages.*

Dr. Jan G. Linn is the chaplain of Lynchburg College in Lynchburg, Virginia. This is his second book.

How are we as Christians to live in a world without being of the world? This question has concerned Christians since the days of the early church. Before that, it was an issue for the Jews; today there is a sense in which the question seems to challenge the adherents of all religions.

The church, says Linn, has come to reflect contemporary culture even though that culture challenges the validity of the very things Christians profess to believe. In particular, the modern world view denies the reality of the supernatural. We need to recognize our enculturation and to acknowledge its practical effects on us, and then to do something to counter these effects. The time has come, says the author, to show how our beliefs affect our daily lives. Linn prescribes a renewed appreciation for our covenantal relationship with God as the means of preserving us from this devilish enculturation.

Linn suggests that we can accomplish this, at least in part, through regular covenant renewals such as occurred in ancient Israel. These renewal celebrations would include four elements. The renewal ritual itself would provide a time for us to reflect on and reconsider our relationship with God. Secondly, the renewal would serve as a recognition of God's absolute sovereignty, a reminder of our reliance upon God that causes us to look to Him for guidance and care. The covenant renewal would also mean a clarifying of our identity as



God's people. Finally the covenantal relationship would define our life style because how we live depends upon whose we are. Our life style is shaped by our identity.

Linn provides a number of suggestions for avoiding enculturation and for living in a covenant relationship with God. For many of us these will prove the most difficult part of the book because Linn challenges radically our present practices and attitudes.

Despite the title, Linn is no fundamentalist. He is a man who believes the gospel is necessarily in conflict with the status quo of the contemporary culture. He holds a high view of biblical authority and has a concern for social ministry. Linn emphasizes that the pastor's prayer and teaching ministry is central in combating the enculturation of the church.

This is a practical book and well worth the time it would take ministers and interested laity to read it. The author includes a sample covenant service, endnotes, and suggestions for further reading. The book could usefully serve as the text for a discussion group or adult Sunday school class.

Chaplain (CPT) Douglas McCreedy  
USANG

## Praying Shapes Believing

*Leonel L. Mitchell*

*Winston Press, Hardcover, \$24.50, 358 pages.*

Leonel L. Mitchell is an Episcopal priest and professor of liturgics at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary in Chicago. He is the author of several books, including *The Meaning of Ritual* and *The Way We Pray*.

Regardless of whether the coin is a penny, a nickel, or a dime, every coin has two sides. In a similar way that a coin relates to the past for identity and to the present for usefulness, *The Episcopal Book of Common Prayer 1979* does much the same thing. In the last five years two major works have been published about the church's "new" prayer book's relationship to the past and to the present. Dr. Marion J. Hatchett's *Commentary on the American Prayer Book 1979* sharply defines the origins of the book's content and structure. Dr. Mitchell's book, *Praying Shapes Believing* reflects on the structure and content as an expression of the theology of the Episcopal Church today. The two works complement each other much as two sides of a coin.

*Praying Shapes Believing* is smoothly written with tact and diplomacy. See how Fr. Mitchell comments on the Episcopal

Church's practice of signing the infant in baptism.

The use by priests of episcopally consecrated chrism has always been seen as binding the presbyter who presides at a baptism to the bishop. The bishop, as the chief priest and pastor of the local church, is the normative chief celebrant of both baptism and eucharist. When the presbyter replaces him in this role, the use of chrism which the bishop has consecrated signifies that the presiding priest is acting with the consent of and in communion with the bishop who both consecrated the chrism and who delivered it to the presbyter to use at baptism.

What needs might this book fill in the pluralist arena of the military chaplaincy? The book could be very useful as a guide for a chaplain who is not an Episcopalian but who wishes to understand the worship and ministry of the Episcopal Church.

CDR Babcock Fitch, CHC, USN











